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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

WITNESS TO HER IDENTITY: A STUDY OF SYDNEY STRICKLAND TULLY CANADIAN WOMAN ARTIST (1860 - 1911)

BY

K. LYNN SINCLAIR

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF **MASTER OF ARTS**

IN THE HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1990

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ISBN 0-315-64918-6

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DEGREE: MASTER OF ARTS

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SUBMITTED BY K. LYNN SINCLAIR

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

DR. B.J. ELLIOTT

DR. V. CHAN

DR. S. JACKEL

DR. J. WILLIAMSON

DATE: 31 August 1990

This Thesis Is Dedicated
To
My Husband Ron Smith,
My Parents Doreen And John Sinclair,
And To
The Memory Of My Grandmother
Frances May Sinclair

Thank You

ABSTRACT

Sydney Strickland Tully (1860-1911), a Canadian woman artist, was active at the turn of the century as a *genre*, portrait, and landscape painter. The contributions made by Tully as one of a number of prominent women artists working in Toronto, have been largely forgotten by contemporary surveys of Canadian historical art. These contributions are the focus of this study.

Pursuing a number of interrelated questions framed by a knowledge of recent feminist art historical scholarship, Tully's worklife is examined within an international and national context. The study opens with an investigation of her education and career opportunities as a young Ontario woman and then proceeds to consider her artistic training and later position as a *juste milieu* artist. Of particular interest are Tully's many *genre* paintings which concentrate on the theme of domestic labour and motherhood. These reveal a subtle but marked rejection of the conventional casting of "woman as object" that was perpetuated by middle-class partriarchal codes of seeing. Finally, Tully's success as a portraitist is explored.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I welcome this opportunity to thank my supervisor, Bridget Elliott, for first opening my eyes to the challenges and rewards of looking at art from non-traditional perspectives; and for her encouragement, patience and tenacity in seeing me through the research and writing process.

Thanks go also to Doreen Sinclair for volunteering her editing skills, to John Sinclair for his support and to Joan Mucha for deciphering my illegible script into polished hard copy.

I am also grateful for the emotional support provided by my colleague and good friend Sandy Gunderson who offered me her friendship and her hospitality.

Finally I thank my husband, Ron, for his love and inspiration, and without whose patience and motivation this truly would not have been possible.

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INTRODUCTION

Sydney Stickland Tully, a Canadian woman artist, was particularly active as a genre, portrait and landscape painter in this country during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. Yet her name and her works are rarely referred to in contemporary surveys of Canadian historical art. The primary purpose of this thesis is to resurrect the contributions made by Tully as one of a number of prominent women artists working in Toronto at the turn of the century. In the course of this study I want to suggest some reasons for her subsequent obscurity as well as examine the quality and nature of her working life as an artist, and the route she chose to achieve her goals. This will shed light not only on her own career, but also on the lives of many of her female counterparts whose progress was similar to her own.

Tully's formal artistic training began in 1883 at the Ontario School of Art where she studied under William Cruikshank. This was followed by courses at the Slade School in London with Alphonse Legros between 1884 and 1886. That summer also marked the beginning of two years of study at the Academie Julian under Benjamin Constant in Paris, culminating in the exhibition of an Etude in the Salon of 1888. Tully returned home to Toronto that same year and at the age of twenty-eight opened a studio modelled on the Parisian *atelier* system. She was elected a member of the Ontario Society of Artists (1880) and an associate of the Royal Canadian Academy (1890).

Throughout her adult life Tully continued to schedule regular study trips to the Continent. By the fall of 1890 she was back in France studying under Tony Robert-Fleury and Gustave Courtois. The years 1892 to 1893 were spent in Toronto and it was probably during this period that Tully travelled to New York to train with William Merritt Chase at his Shinnecock Summer School. After a brief trip to England in 1893 to attend classes with C. Lazar, Tully remained in Toronto until 1895 when she left for a two-year sojourn in Great Britain. While operating a studio in South Kensington she also served on the executive of the 91 Club and Society of Applied Art. In 1896 and 1897 she exhibited at the Royal Academy and with the Society of Women Artists.

Returning home to Toronto, Tully spent the next nine years in Canada, confining her summer sketching trips to rural Quebec (1899 and 1900). She became a founding

member of the Society of Mural Decorators, and then in 1906 left for a two-year sabbatical in Holland and the Jersey Channel Islands. After Tully arrived home in 1908, her health began to deteriorate. She died of pernicious anemia in 1911 at the age of fifty-one.

Throughout her career Tully exhibited regularly with the R.C.A. (95 paintings between 1888 and 1911); the O.S.A.; and the Art Association of Montreal. She entered a work at the Chicago Exposition of 1893, and again at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904 where she won a Bronze medal for The Twilight of Life. After her death a large retrospective exhibition of 429 works was held in Toronto.

It would be unfortunate, to say the least, if these accomplishments, and the energy and talent that went into their making, remained concealed by time and omission. Nonetheless, in and of themselves, they are merely concrete instances of a working life that requires a broader and more detailed examination to be fully appreciated. This study intends to place Tully within an international and national context while pursuing a number of interrelated questions framed by a knowledge of recent feminist art historical scholarship. Some of the issues to be investigated will include: 1) how Tully negotiated her position as a woman artist within a patriarchal turn-of-the-century artistic system; (2) how Tully's works relate to those of other female artists working at this time; (3) whether a gender specific set of subjects is present in her pictures; (4) whether Tully attempted to alter or transform traditional themes; and how Tully handled the frequently recurring subject of women in her paintings. Finally, in order to provide an overview of this artist's significance, Tully and her work will be examined in order to determine whether she ultimately reinforced or challenged the repressed position of women artists during this period.

Chapter One focuses on the educational and career opportunities of nineteenth century Ontario women; the growth of Canadian art in that province and Tully's introduction to this world through her commercial art work. In Chapter Two, the lifestyle and training of women artists is examined. Chapter Three concentrates on Tully's position as a *juste milieu* artist; and the increasing importance of figurative over landscape painting in Ontario toward the end of the century. Chapter Four investigates the nature of the many *genre* paintings Tully produced, which focus on the household labours of rural women. In

Chapter Five her significant contributions in the field of portraiture and the revival of pastel painting in Canada are detailed.

Writing of the early American woman artist Henrietta Johnston, Eola Willis commented in 1927: "As she died a maid, her history is simply 'the shadow of a name...' "[1] For so long this has been the case for women practising art, and certainly Sydney Tully's present-day reputation is but a shadow of what it once was. My intention is to change this.

INTRODUCTION

Notes

1. Eola Willis, "The First Woman Painter in America," International Studio (July 1927):13.

CHAPTER ONE

CHOICES

Betwixt the devil
and the deep sea

ERASMUS - *Adagia*

Male and female represent the two sides of the great radical dualism. But, in fact, they are perpetually passing into one another. Fluid hardens to solid, solid rushes to fluid. There is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman.[1]

These words were written by Margaret Fuller in 1845. The opposite view, however, was held by most Canadians during the late nineteenth century. Women were deemed fundamentally different from men, and these differences, which were thought to have a psychological and biological basis, precluded women from sharing in the same educational and career opportunities as men. In the field of art, notwithstanding the fact that creative opportunities had increasingly expanded throughout the nineteenth century,[2] women artists faced problems over and above those of their male counterparts. These included gender role expectations and accusations of physical and mental inferiority, all of which made the job of artist a difficult one for a woman to pursue successfully.

Sydney Tully was one of Canada's pioneering woman artists. Along with a handful of female colleagues she set precedents for future generations of artists who were women. An examination of Tully's early years in Toronto reveals that in all likelihood her career choice was not an easy one.

It has been recorded that early in her life Tully designed Christmas cards and painted photographs.[3] These occupations may well have engaged her for a number of years until she decided to pursue a professional artistic career. Tully received her early education in Toronto, but did not apply for admission to the Ontario School of Art, at the time the only art school in the province, until October 1883. The school by then had been in operation for seven years and Tully at the age of twenty-three was older than the average student, whose age ranged between fifteen and eighteen years.[4] In the absence of any personal documentation related to Sydney Tully, the reasons for this cannot be determined with absolute certainty. An examination of possible causes for her late start may describe the situation for young Canadian women who were considering becoming artists in Ontario during the 1870's.

As was the case for a number of nineteenth century women artists, Sydney Tully came from a family possessing artistic and literary talent.[5] Certainly her family

background would not seem, on the surface, to have been an obstacle. A biography of her father, the architect Kivas Tully (1820-1905), written in 1898, mentions his two daughters Sydney Strickland and Louise Beresford as both being promising artists who had their father's encouragement.[6] Sydney Tully's family was artistically renowned and she was considered to have been raised in "an atmosphere of culture."[7] It is not surprising then that since Tully was from such "a distinguished and gifted family, and early showed promise of developing as an artist,"[8] she would be drawn to supporting herself by utilizing her skills, initially in the commercial world of Christmas card design.[9]

Although the first Christmas card was published in London in 1843,[10] the custom of exchanging these festive cards in Canada did not become common until the middle 1870's. By 1880 the practice was considered a craze.[11] During the 1870's, Canadian publishers were successfully competing against the quality and quantity of cards flooding in from abroad. In Toronto, four companies were pioneers in the publication of Christmas cards: Rolph, Smith & Co.; James Campbell & Son; Barber & Ellis; and the Toronto Lithographing Company.[12] Emphasis was on the depiction of typical Canadian pursuits (such as maple sugar making and sleigh riding) and scenes (such as lumbermen's shanties and Indian encampments). The fact that talented individuals turned to this occupation is evidenced by company advertisements that proudly identify designers, only at least one of whom, James Weston (1815-1896), was a member of the Society of Canadian Artists and a frequent exhibitor at the Art Association of Montreal.[13] For Canadian artists, Canadian Christmas cards meant a welcome new source of income. The Toronto stationers, Barber & Ellis, employed some of the best known artists of the day, such as Charlotte Schrieber (1834-1922) and William Cruikshank (1849-1922), along with talented novices such as Sydney Tully.[14]

Canadians turned eagerly to these domestically produced cards as fitting souvenirs for overseas friends. The designs were considered to be "an agreeable change from the sickly medievalism, and the tiresome repetitions of religious art"[15] from the Old World. Their "local colour [was] an especial charm and their picturesque scenes a wonder and delight."[16] Although the cards were sometimes considered to be "wanting" in the area of composition, drawing and colouring, they were nonetheless admired for their "peculiarly and distinctively Canadian" element[17] and would have provided Tully with early exposure to *genre* scenes, which were to later become such a large part of her *oeuvre*.

Another commercial occupation that engaged Tully, and a number of other artists during the 1870's, was the painting of photographs. The practice of photographers employing artists to colour photographs was not uncommon. In Toronto, a number of established painters, such as Lucius O'Brien (1832-1890) and Fredereick Verner (1832-1900), were employed on a casual basis by the photographic studio of Notman & Fraser; in all likelihood, it was with this firm that Tully also found work.[18]

The Toronto branch of the business was established in 1867 by the artist John Fraser (1838-1898) in partnership with William Notman (1826-1891). Notman, for whom Fraser had worked since 1860, had successfully operated a studio in Montreal since 1856. "Lucrative and only slightly demeaning,"[19] the tinting of photographs was a viable employment opportunity for many artists, and the studio quickly became a gathering place. Fraser also organized the Ontario Society of Artists (O.S.A.),[20] of which he was the first Vice-President, in 1872. The O.S.A's opening exhibition was held at the Notman & Fraser Gallery the following year.

As a talented young woman employed by a photographic studio, Tully probably would have been assigned the job of hand-colouring portraits with oil, water-colour or gouache paints. The hand-tinting of photographs was a long standing practice[21] which began with the colouring of early daguerreotypes and salted paper prints. With the later development of collodian on glass and albumen on paper, the tradition was continued. The number of layers of paint used in colouring a portrait could be varied considerably. With a minimum amount, the presence in tone and the outline of the photographic image was retained. On the other hand, the application of many layers and a stretched canvas backing completely disguised the photographic base. This latter approach required a degree of artistic skill if poorly applied colour and awkward brushstrokes were to be avoided.[22] Fraser, who was considered a master of tone and a sensitive colourist, along with the firm's other senior artists was always willing to help younger workers with painting problems. Hand-colouring photographs lent the medium an air of legitimacy as the images entered the market looking very much like drawings, etchings or paintings.[23] Portrait photographs were the most frequently painted pictures. This early experience with colour and form as it relates to the human face perhaps played a part in Tully's later success as a portraitist.

Tully's experience with the commercial art fields of photograph tinting and Christmas card design reflects a tentative venture into the Toronto art world. With her early artistic talent and interests well documented, it is curious nonetheless that she did not plunge immediately into more advanced artistic training at the Ontario School of Art. There are many possible reasons, not the least of which was the fact that becoming an artist was not the usual vocation then chosen by young women.[24]

In Canada during the late nineteenth century, the expected role for women was that of wife, mother and homemaker. The family was considered the basis of society and woman its core component.[25] By 1870 social reforms had established a public school system that gave every Canadian child the opportunity to be educated; and as early as 1871 the number of girls enrolled in elementary schools was equal to that of boys.[26] As youngsters, these children were considered to possess no essential mental or moral differences. After puberty, however, education and expectations differed considerably.[27] Higher education for Canadian women was to be obtained only at private colleges[28] where "the curriculum was designed to train girls in the arts and graces of life, and not for any career but that of school teaching."[29] The number of women involved in the teaching profession quickly increased as middle-class women sought more independent lives as they were increasingly freed from the home through labour-saving innovations. Through sanctions placed on the type of higher education they could receive, women were steered into jobs that merely carried their private functions within the family into the public sphere. Paid considerably less than men for their labour, women were encouraged to pursue careers as secretaries, librarians, nurses and teachers. As teachers, however, they were considered suitable only for the education of small children. This was viewed as an acceptable extension of their primary occupation as nurturers.

The first attempts of women to enter universities aroused fierce public controversy.[30] During the period when Tully was an adolescent, advanced study was deemed harmful to women both physically and mentally since it interfered with their destined roles as wives and mothers. One advocate of higher education for women, who wrote a number of articles on the status of women for local periodicals during the 1870's under the pen-name "Fidelis," was the poet and novelist Agnes Machar (1837-1927). Machar attempted to quell fears that educated women would shirk their familial responsibilities by conceding that women and men possessed intrinsically different mental

characteristics.[31] That Tully would have encountered some of these articles while growing up in Toronto seems more than likely.[32] Whether they had an impact on her can only remain speculation. Machar's articles do, however, provide some indication of the types of problems Tully would have experienced in her decision to practise art.

In her writings, Agnes Machar disputed the grounds then being used to exclude women from pursuing higher education and careers. Two of her arguments were especially relevant to Tully's more specialized training in the fine arts. One was the suggestion that the education of girls and boys should be identical and co-educational, even at advanced stages. At the time, the standard arguments against identical co-education involved a number of hypotheses that opponents accepted as absolute truths. One frequently touted theory was based on the belief that women's brains were "some five or six ounces lighter than those of men [and] and cannot stand so great a strain," and that the "special organization of women marks out for her a special career."[33] Masked as concern for women's health lest they be permanently disabled, these arguments were challenged by American co-education institutions which, after making special inquiries, found that "the girls who studied the hardest were also the healthiest."[34]

Another concern was that educational norms would be undermined by the presence of intellectually inferior women in the classroom. In 1875 a paper read before the Ontario Teachers Association warned that "the college that instructs the sexes together must finally have its standard relatively lowered."[35] Canadians appeared to seek a compromise solution by advocating and practising identical but separate education.

In spite of these obstacles, progress was nonetheless being identified by the end of the 1870's. In her article "The New Ideal of Womanhood" published in 1879, Agnes Machar discussed the changes that had taken place in a woman's character over the last decade. She had gone from being "a creature of sentiment and emotion, absolutely dependent on man for any life worth living" to an individual possessing "endurance, foresight, strength and skill;" "...the fact is practically admitted now, that woman as well as man requires a harmonious and symmetrical development of all her faculties."[36] By 1879 Canadian women were being granted academic privileges and certificates, if not formal degrees, and "parents no longer regard[ed] it as a startling phenomenon if a daughter proposed to qualify herself for a professional or sub-professional career."[37]

For Agnes Machar "...the new ideal of womanhood with its larger conceptions, wider views and nobler possibilities" had fairly superseded the old.[38] It would seem, then, that Canadian society was adopting a somewhat more liberal attitude towards the education of women while women themselves were gaining access to areas of intellectual pursuit previously denied them. Nonetheless, class-oriented role expectations could prove limiting, prompting Machar to write:

> Girls of the lower classes are brought up to feel that at an early age they are expected to be helpers, not burdens, to their families. Consequently they are independent of marriage...But the upper-class girl, who has never been trained to do one thing well, is as helpless and pitiable a being as the world contains.[39]

Sydney Tully did not seem to have been as limited as other female members of the middle class (evidence of this being her work at Christmas card design and photo tinting) and thus is not quite typical of Machar's description. Nonetheless, the career limitations that Tully would have encountered had become more pronounced as the century progressed because of numerous changes that had taken place in the Canadian economy. In order to better appreciate her situation it is useful to look briefly at these changes.

During the first half of the century, Ontario's economy was based on colonization. All family members laboured to help establish homes, farms and rural communities, and women were valued as full economic partners in the struggle for survival.[40] As the century advanced, however, the provinces, towns and villages grew. Individual craft producers and highly specialized tradesmen were replaced by industrialized forms of production where women's activities were undervalued. The first women to be marginalized from the productive system in Ontario, as in other capitalist economies, were the wives of the prosperous members of the rising middle class.

Women's economic marginalization was gradually extended and mystified to the point where they were considered unable to function in a competitive society. When Canadian women fought for higher education and more career choices, any latitude given was carefully determined so that already existing exploitative relationships would not be undermined.[41] This occurred in all areas of employment, including the fine arts. Young

women were encouraged to study art not as a profession but as an accomplishment to make them better wives and mothers. "The expectation of marriage and motherhood delimited the female sphere."[42] Even for a young single woman, such as Sydney Tully, the expectation that she would marry influenced the type of employment she would choose. Suitable careers were usually those that required the smallest financial and personal investment.

Such expectations of women marrying were not always realistic. For example, in the latter half of the nineteenth century Canada possessed more women than men, and this ratio increased between 1851 and 1881.[43] The wage-earning female labour force remained primarily single until well into the twentieth century.[44] Thus although the unmarried state was never considered ideal, non-marriage was certainly feasible. By the age of twenty-three Tully, who never married, may have been considering the very real possibility (by choice or not) that marriage was not in her future. By 1883, she may also have exhausted the challenges offered by Christmas card design and painting photographs, and begun thinking about a professional future for herself. Although limited, she had a number of options, most of which Agnes Machar discussed in her articles. In fact, Machar frequently addressed unmarried career-oriented women such as Tully. Machar encouraged her female readers to consider a variety of employment opportunities although she was careful to point out that every profession open to women was fraught with difficulties and prejudice.

As previously mentioned, for a young woman like Tully, class background was a significant determining factor in her choice of work. Domestic service was still an important source of employment, but usually only for young immigrant or farm girls.[45] Women were also increasingly employed in factories or at piece-work in their homes, but this was an avenue followed mainly by women from the lower classes. Clerical work was still a male bastion and even by 1901 only one in twenty female workers was clerical.[46] Retail work was also an option, but for the most part it was viewed as merely a step up for working class women. After domestic service, teaching was the occupation that engaged most Canadian women.[47] Although viewed as a respectable job and one with some financial security, it was not considered an upwardly mobile profession by middle-class women. In Toronto during the 1870's, the average salary for a woman teacher was $220-$400 per year while a man earned $600-$700.[48] Discrepancies in salary such as these

were primarily based on the belief that women worked for "'pin-money" or amusement, and not through necessity. Another profession that attracted a large number of Canadian women was nursing, although at best it was one step up from servitude and thus held in dubious esteem.[49] Entering into the medical and legal professions was still relatively rare. Two areas of pursuit being explored more and more frequently by women, however, were in the visual and performing arts.

In spite of women's increasing participation in the arts, Agnes Machar warned that "...in art ...there can be no success [for women] without years of persevering labour."[50] The professions of artist and writer were ill-advised, in Machar's view, "unless [women] are prepared to submit to years of apprenticeship, with little or no remuneration, and to persevere in an uphill work in spite of repeated disappointments that sadly clip the wings of young enthusiasm" and commit themselves to what was at best an ill-paid profession as a means of subsistence.[51] As with other occupations, women's participation in the arts was usually confined to minor (even "domestic") roles:

> There are, however, several subordinate departments of artistic work which do not require so long an apprenticeship and would be more speedily remunerative. In wood-carving and wood-cutting, in porcelain painting, and artistic house decoration, are branches of aesthetic work in which women can and do excel.....[52]

Such minor areas were felt to be consistent with women's biological makeup and their social roles as wives and mothers.[53] Women were deemed to have the appropriate patience and carefulness for pursuits such as porcelain and ivory painting, children's book illustration, botanical art, and lace and embroidery design. Even if they strayed beyond these areas into painting or engraving, their modesty and privacy were still protected since women could follow these professions in the seclusion of their homes and need never be called upon to interact with the public.[54]

But what of those women, such as Sydney Tully, whom "Nature [had] in some sense mocked...filling small breasts with limitless desires...?"[55] Although Toronto was to support a vital group of talented women artists by the 1890's, during the early 1880's Tully was virtually alone.[56] Few mature women artists in the city could provide her with guidance to counteract the dire predictions of the journals and magazines. Montreal-based

Frances Ann Hopkins (1838-1918) had earlier gained some recognition as a painter for scenes that depicted her travels with her husband by canoe through the Canadian wilderness, but she had returned to England around 1870.[57] In fact, the only established woman artist of note in Toronto during Tully's youth was Charlotte Mount Brock Schreiber (1834-1922). Schreiber, who had received professional training as an artist in her native England, had had works shown at the Paris Salon and the Royal Academy exhibitions. She had moved to the Toronto environs with her husband in 1875 where "her personality [became] a powerful factor in art circles."[58] Although her work varied considerably in quality, Schreiber's genre and figure paintings stood out favorably amid a sea of landscapes. She was considered a great acquisition when she joined the O.S.A. in 1876.

By the time Charlotte Schreiber arrived in Canada in the 1860's, there was evidence of a shift in the cultural centre of English-speaking Canada from Montreal to Toronto.[59] Toronto, then considered perhaps the most British city on earth,[60] experienced unprecedented industrial growth and a population increase during the period from 1870 to 1900.[61] Toronto's centralizing role was reinforced by the Act of Confederation in 1867 and the creation of the Canadian nation. Nationalistic aspirations also extended into the artistic sphere where Ontario's disparate artistic communities expressed a desire for stronger communal support and a larger role in Canadian society. Such groups argued that the time had come for Canadian artists to break away from exhibiting at provincial fairs, often along side displays of produce and livestock. Prior to the formation of the O.S.A.[62] in 1872, such fairground venues had been the major public forum for displaying works of art. The objectives of the newly formed O.S.A. were clearly stated in their constitution:

> ....the fostering of Original Art in the province, the holding of Annual Exhibitions, the formation of an Art Library and Museum and School of Art....[63]

The O.S.A. successfully followed up on their mandate. Tully was thus in a position to witness a number of significant developments in the Ontario art world during her youth in Toronto, not the least of which was a subtle shift away from the dominance of landscape painting.

Through the 1870's and 1880's the O.S.A. held regular exhibitions as promised and the Toronto art market expanded. The exhibitions were great public successes with over four thousand visitors attending the first show, where twenty-eight artists (only one of whom was a woman, Mrs. Blackwell) displayed two hundred and fifty-two works.[64] Landscapes predominated and the show was praised for its "essentially native character."[65]

Landscape painting had first dominated the art scene in Ontario in the 1850's during the height of British immigration. English-born artists such as Daniel Fowler (1810-1894), John Fraser, and F.M. Bell-Smith (1846-1923) brought with them the tradition of landscape water-colour painting. During the 1860's artists living in Toronto, such as Lucius O'Brien (1832-1899), F.A. Verner (1836-1928), T. Mower Martin (1838-1934) and Marmaduke Matthews (1837-1913), began concentrating on Canadian scenes. Increasingly, they turned to oil paint as "a more appropriate medium for capturing the rugged Canadian scenery."[66]

Most Canadians at this time possessed a vision of a broad, strong, and wealthy Canada with "a future of limitless potential, open to those with the strength to take hold, and the fortitude to hang on."[67] One way this potential was visualized was through the works of the major Canadian landscape artists of the period. The landscape paintings of the 1860's and 70's played a decisive role in the development of an English-speaking Canadian nationalism.[68]

As the decade progressed, however, the profusion of landscape subjects began to rankle, prompting one critic to write that the most striking thing about the fourth annual O.S.A. exhibition "...was the woeful lack of ideas...with few exceptions...the whole two hundred and thirty [paintings] were simply sketches from nature..."[69] The impact, then, that Charlotte Schreiber and other figure painters may have had on Tully during these formative years should not be underestimated, since Tully herself went on to do her best work in this area. By the late 1870's, critics had a tendency to view the preponderance of landscapes and the lack of elaborate works in figure subjects as an indication of the infantile stage of Canadian art culture. This state of affairs was blamed on the fact that "the necessary educational appliances [did] not exist here."[70] To remedy this, one of the O.S.A.'s top priorities was to establish an art school to provide talented young Canadians with rudimentary training so that they could more easily compete in European *ateliers*.

When the O.S.A. established the Ontario School of Art in 1876, it was a small enterprise run on a volunteer basis.[71] By the time Tully attended in 1883, the School was under the auspices of the Department of Education and out of the hands of the O.S.A. School maintenance, and the number of pupils enrolled, had simply become too large to be managed by volunteer artists. At the same time the goals of the School had shifted from an emphasis on the fine arts to the industrial arts, and by 1883 their main aim was "...to prepare teachers who may be required for teaching industrial drawing...[and] to provide technical instruction and art culture for persons employed in the various trades [and] manufactures, etc..."[72]

From the beginning the school's curriculum had been based on the Department of Science and Art at the South Kensington schools in England. This department was particularly admired for its emphasis on "practical art," its systematic course of training, and its centralized examination scheme,[73] which were considered "...to have revolutionized the system of industrial art throughout the whole world."[74] At the Ontario School of Art tuition emphasized drawing at every level[75] followed by examinations. By the time Tully attended the School, a systematic course of instruction had been established that comprised of three stages: elementary and advanced drawing, and painting.[76] Records indicate that Tully was enrolled, and wrote the exams for, the Linear Perspective and Geometrical Drawing classes. The value of geometrical drawing to art education was considered important: "Geometrical drawing is but the interpretation and application of mathematics to industry, bringing the abstract truths of science to the concrete form of service."[77]

By 1884 the School possessed approximately one hundred and fifty students distributed throughout day and evening classes.[78] Ninety-two percent of the afternoon students were women. The majority of these listed themselves as having no occupation and were attending merely for self-improvement.[79] Conversely, only thirty-four percent of the evening students were women, most of whom were teachers, milliners or Normal School students. Clearly, although the School sought to discourage those who might wish to attend "merely for amusement or as an accomplishment,"[80] a number of students were probably doing just that. Because of this, the painting class led by Dickson Patterson (1854-1930) was limited to twenty, resulting in a long waiting list.

For the new student the course of study was predetermined, regardless of previous experience. Geometry and Perspective were compulsory upon entrance and had to be passed before advanced classes could be considered. Fortunately for Tully, William Cruikshank,[81] an experienced pen-and-ink artist and an accomplished draughtsman, was in charge of these classes. Cruikshank was considered a "racy personality, endowed with more than an average share of Scottish sarcasm..."[82] His critiques of student's works were keen and exacting for he felt that drawing was an essential foundation upon which more elaborate and detailed studies could later be established. Distinguished more as a draughtsman than a colourist, Cruikshank was described by one of his students as "...an aristocratic tramp...known for being very outspoken. He just taught those he was interested in."[83] His early encouragement of Tully would perhaps account for her brief attendance at the School, for within a year she was furthering her studies at the renowned Slade School in England. Tully's tutelage under Cruikshank would have sharpened her competency at realizing form two-dimensionally, and strengthened her ability to organize and arrange objects upon the canvas surface. Her future paintings, extensions and amplifications of the various kinds of drawing taught at the School, would reflect this early training.

At this time, Cruikshank was also acquiring a reputation as an innovator in the field of Canadian landscape by introducing figures into his compositions. Refusing to depict northern and rural scenes isolated from human occupation, Cruikshank's 1884 success with Breaking the Road[84] anticipates the importance that figure and genre painting was to play in the Canadian scene during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Cruikshank's impact on Tully and her exposure to the works of Charlotte Schreiber were probably important factors in her own decision to frequently concentrate on the human figure.

The 1881 O.S.A. Annual Report stated that the Ontario School of Art had "been carried on most successfully, being attended by a large number of students representing all classes of society" and that a few of those students had "devoted themselves wholly to Art and are now completing their studies in the more advanced Schools of Painting in Europe."[85] One of those students was soon to be Sydney Tully. To reach that point, however, Tully had had to make some important decisions. Although the Ontario art scene

was beginning to flourish and supported a number of talented artists, there were no unmarried women artists practising whom Tully could emulate. For a single woman contemplating a professional future, occupational choices were still largely determined by the expectations surrounding one's own social class. A career in the fine arts, usually chosen only by middle- or upper-class women, was viewed as dubious, unreliable and uncertain. Once having made this choice, however, Tully proceeded quickly. After only two semesters at the Ontario School of Art she sailed for London and Paris to further her studies.

CHAPTER ONE

Notes

1. S. Margaret Ossoli Fuller, Woman in the Nineteenth Century (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1980 reprint of 1845), 103.

2. For a thorough documentation of this see: Charlotte Yeldham, Women Artists in Nineteenth-Century France and England. 2 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1984).

3. J. Russell Harper, Early Painters and Engravers in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 313.

4. Ontario College of Art Enrollment Records. Archives of Ontario.

5. Tully's father, Kivas Tully (1820-1905), was an architect and her mother Maria an amateur painter. Tully was the grand-niece of early Canadian authors Susanna Moodie (1804-1885) and Catherine Parr Traill (1802-1899), and English historian Agnes Moodie Fitzgibbon who was also a respected botanical artist. Her grandfather, Lt. Col. Samuel Strickland (1805-1867) was a writer.

6. Unknown author referred to in Florence MacDonald, "Strickland Family Artists," Canadian Collector 2/3 (April 1967): 8.

7. Saturday Night Magazine (Toronto), 10 December 1898.

8. Toronto Globe and Mail, 19 July 1911.

9. For a thorough exploration of Canadian women's increasing involvement in paid work during this time see Canadian Women: A History, ed. Alison Prentice (Toronto: Harcourt, Brace, Govanovich Canada Inc., 1988). This text closely examines various types of work, and the degree to which middle-class women were involved. Although their motives for working are not explored, financial necessity would seem an obvious factor. I have not uncovered any evidence that suggests there was any stigma attached to middle-class girls choosing to take up paid work as long as it remained within their "sphere." A brief examination of the feminization of traditionally male occupations in order to incorporate them into women's sphere occurs later in this chapter.

10. Kenneth Rowe, "Greetings: The Christmas Card in Canada," Canadian Collector 21 (November 1986): 32.

11. Elizabeth Collard, "Canada's Victoria Christmas Cards," Canadian Antiques Collector 8/9 (November/December 1974): 38

12. Collard, "Canada's Cards," 37.

13. Ibid., 36.

14. Ibid., 38.

15. "Canadian Christmas Cards", Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National and National Review, 7 (December 1881): 656.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Robert Gagen (1847-1926), Homer Watson (1855-1936), Horatio Walker (1858-1938), and George Reid (1860-1947) were also employed by Notman and Fraser. Ann Thomas, Fact and Fiction: Canadian Painting and Photography, 1860-1900. (Montreal: McCord Museum, 1979): 26.

19. Dennis Reid, A Concise History of Canadian Painting, 2nd ed., (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988): 84.

20. From here on referred to as the O.S.A.

21. Thomas, Fact and Fiction, 29 - 37.

22. Ibid., 37 - 38.

23. Ibid., 30 - 31.

24. Speculation on why Tully made such a relatively late start in embarking upon a career as a professional artist must unfortunately remain just that. No documentation has been uncovered to account for it, and thus, the following analysis treats the problem in a general sense.

25. Jeanne L'Esperance, The Widening Sphere: Women in Canada, 1870-1940 (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada), 2.

26. Ibid., 15.

27. Ibid., 14.

28. For an interesting discussion of a nineteenth century Canadian Women's College see Rev. John F. German, "Ontario Ladies College, Whitby." The Canadian Magazine 5 (May 1895): 72 - 8.

29. L'Esperance, Widening Sphere, 15.

30. Ibid., 8.

31. Fidelis, "Higher Education for Women," The Canadian Monthly and National Review 7 (February 1875): 145.

32. Aside from daily newspapers, Toronto during the 1870's produced only one major literary periodical at a time. The Canadian Magazine (vol. 1-2) in 1871; The Canadian Monthly and National Review (vol. 1-13) from 1872 to 1878; Belford's Monthly (vol. 1-3) in 1877/8; Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly (vol. 1-8) from 1878-1882. These magazines published the works of many local writers. It was not until The Canadian Magazine began publication in 1893 that a monthly survived its first two decades. See: Arthur Colquhoun, "A Century of Canadian Magazines," The Canadian Magazine 17 (June 1901): 141-149; and Karen McKenzie and Mary F. Williamson, ed., The Art and Pictorial Press in Canada (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1979).

33. Fidelis "Higher Education," 148.

34. Ibid., 146.

35. Mr. Buchan, quoted in Fidelis, "Higher Education," 148.

36. Fidelis, "The New Ideal of Womanhood," Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly 2 (June 1879): 659.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 660.

39. Ibid., 669.

40. Leo Johnson, "The Political Economy of Ontario Women in the Nineteenth Century" in Women at Work in Ontario, 1850-1930, eds. Janice Action, Penny Goldsmith and Bonny Shepard (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974), 13. In a pre-capitalistic economy such as colonial Ontario where the family existed as unit of production, the economic role of women and children was essential to its existence. Women regularly enjoyed the rights necessary for engaging in commercial activities even though they were still considered inferior and inept beings who required the guardianship of a man outside these spheres.

41. Janice Action, Intro. Women at Work, iv. In order to secure the safe transmission of wealth and property to the inheriting male, greater emphasis was placed on a woman's fidelity. Economically, women restricted to the home were also valuable as an unpaid labour force, which added to the productivity of men by maintaining their homes and rearing their children. The marginalization of women in a capitalist society follows from the inability of such an economy to employ all potential workers, and its need for a reserve labour force that can be utilized or cast aside in accordance with economic exigencies.

42. Linda Kealey, Intro. A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880-1920 (Toronto: The Women's Educational Press, 1979), 6.

43. Ellen Thomas Gee, "Marriage in Nineteenth-Century Canada." Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 19 (August 1982): 319.

44. Kealey, Unreasonable Claim, 6.

45. Alison Prentice, "Writing Women Into History: The History of Women's Work in Canada," Atlantis 3 (Spring 1978): 123.

46. Ibid., 128.

47. Ibid., 129.

48 Ibid., 130.

49. The following discussion of suitable professions for women is based on the arguments found in Fidelis,' "New Ideal," 671-673.

50. Ibid., 673.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. G. Durand, "Women's Position in Art," The Crayon 8 (February 1861): 25.

54. Ibid., 26. In this article Durand is paraphrasing a report by M. Lagrange for a French magazine. Lagrange, who lamented the moral dangers that threaten the *cantatrice* and the *danseuse*, encouraged women to become artists because then they would be guaranteed anonymity and be safely ignored by the public.

55. "Women and the Centennial." Belford's Monthly Magazine 1 (December 1976): 93.

56. Of Tully's future peers, Mary Heister Reid was still studying art in Philadelphia; Florence Carlyle was living in Woodstock, Ontario.; Elizabeth McGillivray Knowles was in eastern Canada; Laura Muntz Lyall on a farm in Muskoka and Mary Bell Eastlake in Montreal.

57. Audrey Miller, "Frances Anne Hopkins, 1838-1919," Lives and Works of the Canadian Artists Ed. R.H. Stacey (Toronto: Dundurn Press) n.p.

58. Dorothy Farr and Natalie Lucky, From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1976): 23.

59. Dennis Reid, Our Own Country Canada (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1979): 5.

60. John Foster Fraser, Canada As It Is (Toronto: Cassell and Company Limited, 1911). 40.

61. Peter G. Goheen, Victorian Toronto, 1850 to 1900 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), 156.

62. Prior to the formation of the O.S.A. there had been two short-lived societies, the Society of Artists and Amateurs (one exhibition) in 1834, and the Toronto Society

of Arts (three exhibitions) in 1847. The O.S.A. was founded at a meeting in Toronto on 25 June 1872, at the home of John Fraser. Other founding members were: Charles S. Millard, T. Mower Martin, James Hoch, Marmaduke Matthews, G.W. Bridgeman, and R.F. Gagen. For a thorough discussion of these early years see: Joan Murray, Ontario Society of Artists: 100 Years (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1972).

63. Ibid., 5.

64. Among the exhibitors were Daniel Fowler, John Fraser, Robert Gagen, T. Mower Martin, Lucius O'Brien, F. Verner and Robert Whale.

65. "The Fine Arts in Ontario," The Canadian Monthly and National Review 3 (May 1873): 545.

66. J. Russel Harper, Painting in Canada: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1985), 192.

67. Reid, Our Own Country Canada, 3.

68. Ibid., 2. Landscape art at this time was of very little interest to French Canadians.

69. "Fine Art: Exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists," The Canadian Monthly and National Review" 10 (July 1876): 91. A more thorough treatment of the relationship between landscape painting and the figurative tradition in Ontario at the turn of the century occurs in the next chapter.

70. "Fine Art," 92.

71. For a history of the School, now called the Ontario College of Art see Marie Fleming and John R. Taylor, 100 Years: Evolution of the Ontario College of Art (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1977).

72. Report of the Minister of Education (Ontario) for the Year 1884 (Toronto: Blackett, Robinson, 1885): 242.

73. Fleming and Taylor, 100 Years, 11.

74. Report, 244.

75. Ibid., 235.

76. The Elementary level consisted of the following classes: Freehand Drawing, Practical Geometry, Linear Perspective, Model Drawing and Blackboard and Memory Drawing. The Advanced classes offered: Shading from Flat Examples, Outline Drawing from Casts or Nature, Shading from the Round, Drawing from Flowers and Objects of Natural History, Advanced Perspective, Descriptive Geometry and Topographical Drawing, Drawing from Dictation, Machine Drawing, Building Construction, and Industrial Design. The Painting Class emphasized copying from casts in monochrome and learning to draw with the brush in oil. Report, 235.

77. Ibid., 244.

78. Each term consisted of six weeks and thirty-six lessons (twelve lessons in the painting class). The fee was $6.00 per term for afternoon classes which ran Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Evening classes were cheaper at $3.00 per term but were "specifically available for mechanics, teachers and Normal School students..." Report, 238.

79. Ibid., 243. A discussion of the role of art classes in providing young women with certain "accomplishments" follows in the next chapter.

80. Report of the Minister of Education (Ontario) for the Year 1882. (Toronto: Blackett, Robinson, 1883): 245.

81. William Cruikshank, born in Scotland in 1848, was the grand-nephew of George Cruikshank, the caricaturist and illustrator of Charles Dickens' works. His family immigrated to Canada in 1857, but Cruikshank returned to Scotland at age sixteen to study at the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh; the Royal Academy, London; and in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and the Atelier Yvon. The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war interrupted his studies and Cruikshank returned to London where he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1871 and established a name for himself as a black-and-white illustrator. By 1877 Cruikshank was in New York where he is credited with having introduced the broad, or "Punch," style of pen-and-ink drawing to American magazine illustration. In 1878 he moved to Toronto where he opened a studio and began teaching at the Ontario School of Art, becoming principal in 1884. His association with the School lasted for 35 years. In 1915 Cruikshank went to Kansas City to live with his sister; he died there in 1922. Cruikshank was also a member of the O.S.A. and R.C.A.

82. The Canadian Forum 2 (May 1922): 645.

83. Yvonne Housser quoted in Fleming and Taylor, 100 Years, 15.

84. Robert H. Stacey, "William Cruikshank," Lives and Works of the Canadian Artists Robert H. Stacey ed., (Toronto: Dundurn Press, n.d.), n.p.

85. "Ontario Society of Artists Annual Report for 1881," O.S.A. Papers, Archives of Ontario.

CHAPTER TWO

ATELIER WOMAN

And gladly would [s]he learn
and gladly teach.

CHAUCER - *The Canterbury Tales*
Prologue

...for in nearly every woman who paints... there are two women; the woman of the drawing room, who smiles at compliments, and the atelier woman, who will not listen to them.[1]

It was in 1894 that Elizabeth Champney wrote these words, identifying for her readers the resolution, and perhaps even obstinacy, that was required by the woman artist in pursuit of her goals. As was the case for many of her peers, Sydney Tully's experience as an "*atelier* woman" was a threefold one, as she evolved through the roles of student, professional artist and teacher. Studying first in London and then in Paris, the proving ground for all artists, Tully eventually returned to Canada where she opened her own studio. The training process for young women artists followed a carefully prescribed pattern that on a technical level affected how Tully approached her art, and on a social level how she conducted herself as a teacher.

Tully's decision to continue her studies in these two centres was hardly arbitrary. By the late nineteenth century many believed that it was to the Continent one had to turn in order to find a liberal view of, and better opportunities for, women artists.[2] In London and Paris it was considered a distinct advantage that women were deemed eligible for "the best European training."[3] In part, such a thorough art education gave women like Tully, who possessed technical skills, the confidence to explore and exhibit visual ideas of their own invention. Women artists who pursued a course of "consistent and logical training" were at once given the benefit of the doubt about the seriousness of their resolve to practise art.[4] It was widely accepted that the route to success and recognition depended upon exposure and sales in the main London and Paris exhibitions. If an artist did not engage in these activities he or she was rarely recognized as a "serious" artist. For women in particular, experience in the *ateliers* and art markets of France and England was the "necessary proof of their professional status."[5]

Aside from enhancing one's status as an artist, lengthy exposure to European instruction was also intended to nurture and develop a student's personal approach to art production, both in terms of style and subject matter. Not only did students imitate and absorb, they were also encouraged to experiment. In this respect, as we shall see, the atmosphere of the *atelier*, with the important but not overbearing presence of the master and

the close working relationships that developed among the women, was vital to the cultivation of an independent spirit.

Prior to study in Paris Sydney Tully, like a number of other Canadians, prepared herself by studying in London.[6] Tully's selection of London may have had much to do with the growing reputation of the recently established Slade School of Art, which from its inception in 1871 had admitted women and men on equal terms.[7] A sense of England's liberal climate was captured in 1900 when the artist Anna Lea Merritt commented that the work of women artists had always found a place in England among the general body of art work.[8] This inclusion of women's work, however, was a relatively recent phenomenon. During the early decades of the nineteenth century the goal of art instruction for English women was not to provide them with a profession, but to enhance their accomplishments and attractiveness as marriage partners. Not surprisingly, the usual level of instruction was elementary, and as many women underwent this training (whether they were artistically predisposed or not) the end result was the association of women with mediocre art.[9] The idea of women becoming professionals was seldom entertained. By 1857, however, women who were seriously interested in artistic careers were beginning to challenge the Royal Academy's exclusion of female students. Although by this time academic ideology and exclusiveness were being seriously questioned both in England and France, making the women's demands seem anachronistic, the Royal Academy was still the only source of a fine art education that commanded respect.[10]

Although women were admitted to the Royal Academy schools in 1860, the conditions under which they would be allowed to study differed significantly from that of their male counterparts. Female students were permitted to draw from the living draped model if they exhibited sufficient skill, but they were forbidden access to the nude model and prohibited from attending lectures on anatomy.[11] The importance to an art student of being able to draw from the nude model cannot be overestimated. The English artist Laura Knight, writing about the Nottingham Art School that she attended in 1890, declared:

> No nude model was then provided for any female student at the Art School. This entailed my having to make endless studies from life-size plaster casts of antique statuary instead.... This copying of such stillness I discovered later in life to have been extremely harmful, bringing a woodenness, a dead look, to all my studies.[12]

Knight also complained about the separate classes for male and female students, where she felt she was compelled to work with girls for whom "art was no more than one accomplishment among other forms of higher schooling before taking their place in society as a lady."[13] In Canada the importance of the nude model was similarly recognized, in this case by a woman critic:

> It [study of the nude] should be the starting point, not, as many seem to think, the finishing point, of the study of every artist.[14]

Tully herself actively emphasized the importance of the living model, which in Canada even as late as 1900 was considered sufficiently newsworthy to appear in print, when the art critic for Saturday Night, Jean Grant, drew her readers' attention to the fact that "Miss Tully's class studies entirely from life."[15]

In England women had begun agitating for access to nude life drawing classes at the Royal Academy schools as early as 1872, but it was not until 1903 that such classes for women were established and all other classes became co-educational.[16] Unfortunately the late introduction of such reforms also prevailed at other schools during the two years Tully studied in England (1884-1886), and it was not until her sojourn in Paris that she received this invaluable experience.

The artistic climate for women in London, nonetheless, would have been a refreshing and significant change for the young Canadian woman. By the 1880's women generally had fairly good opportunities for study since education had become more accessible and less expensive. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, a number of talented women practicing in a variety of fields provided successful female role models, indicating that women possessed a definite capacity for serious artistic practice.[17] When Tully arrived in London, women artists of her own age were successfully exhibiting large figure studies at the Royal Academy exhibitions.[18]

Although it was felt in England that there was no income so fluctuating as that of the artist,[19] and that art as a career was suitable only for those single women with talent and an income of at least 200 pounds per year, the alternative of a married career was equally frustrating. Few women were able to negotiate the demands of both. "Being a

wife made a material, psychological and social difference to the life of any middle-class woman of this era....To one wishing to practice art, it affected the nature and scale of her creative work, the physical conditions under which she might work, and the consistency and duration of her practice."[20] Anna Lea Merritt humorously summed up the situation:

> The chief obstacle to a woman's success is that she can never have a a wife.
>
> Just reflect what a wife does for an artist:
>
> Darns the stockings;
> Keeps his house;
> Writes his letters;
> Visits for his benefit;
> Wards off intruders;
> Is personally suggestive of beautiful pictures;
> Always an encouraging and partial critic.
>
> It is exceedingly difficult to be an artist without this time-saving help. A husband would be quite useless. He would never do any of these disagreeable things.[21]

Certainly as a young, single woman Sydney Tully possessed far more freedom to travel and could even spend years, if she wanted to, studying her chosen profession. With respect to the problems of marriage, art historian P.G. Nunn recently wondered "...how many female artists deliberately remained childless or single to achieve their artistic ambitions."[22]

A number of women, however, did manage to negotiate these obstacles, and run studios in London[23] (an enterprise Tully was to engage in upon a return trip to England in 1895-1897). Significantly many of these women benefited from the Slade School of Art's early encouragement of gifted women.[24] When Tully attended the school in 1884, she was one of approximately one hundred and forty students under the tutelage of Professor Alphonse Legros.[25] Her choice of school is easy to understand since it stressed the live model, which was the next best thing to the unavailable option of drawing classes based on the nude model.[26] Since, from its opening in 1871, the Slade's curriculum had emphasized studying the live model, it quickly became the most influential of the three major institutions that taught painting and sculpture in England.[27] Emphasizing both academic and practical instruction, the School's program of study differed considerably from the official government schools of design at South Kensington, and the purely

theoretical courses and lectures on the fine arts offered by such universities as Oxford and Cambridge.

The tone of the Slade had been set by its first professor, Sir Edward Poynter, who was convinced of the superiority of the French system of art instruction. Future Slade professors, like Legros, similarly insisted upon the French example of drawing from live models. Both men were responsible for establishing standards of draughtsmanship that were well maintained and widely recognized.[28] The drawing of the human figure was then "...conceded to be the most difficult branch of art, [but] is also the favorite one with the ambitious student..."[29] Legros taught his students to draw freely, building up their drawings through observation of the broad planes of the model. He insisted students study the relationship of light and shade and half-tone, and that they gradually build up solid forms through superimposed hatching; "...a severe and logical method of constructive drawing..."[30] Tully, as one of the "Slade Girls" (as they had come to be known[31]) would have been presented in class with a number of quickly changing models or casts that were to be carefully but rapidly recorded. Drawing on "Ingres paper"[32] with red or black Italian chalk, the students were required to pay special attention to correctness of drawing, action, light and shade, and tone. The system of elaborate "stippling," which allowed a student to take a mental "nap" while her hand was busily at work, was not allowed.[33] As one student of the Slade observed: "...we did draw, at a time when everywhere else in England students were rubbing and tickling their paper with stump, chalk, charcoal, and india-rubber."[34]

Upon entry at the school, Legros would examine the applicant's admission folio thereby deciding whether the student should enter drawing or painting classes. Since Tully spent two years at the Slade and had had very little previous formal training, it is likely that she began drawing from the antique or from the flat, and progressed later to painting. Eventually she would graduate to the highest class, painting from life.

For students who had progressed to the figure classes, a live model would sit daily from ten until three o'clock. There were three figure classes: one exclusively for male students; one for women; and one mixed class.[35] In the mixed class, the model sat from three-thirty until five o'clock with a new position being arranged every half hour, suggested by each student in turn. The rapidity with which the poses changed was

designed to encourage the student to effect a direct and simple method expressing light and shade, power and action.[36]

Legros also urged his students to begin training their memories by recording in their sketch books events and things seen on the streets of London. Although the dates of two small works by Tully, now located in the Art Gallery of Ontario, entitled Sketch for the Market (fig. 1) and The Market (fig. 2) are unknown, they were probably executed with this early training in mind. Rapidly sketched in pencil, and augmented by light washes of water colour, The Market skillfully captures a small portion of a crowded market scene. In this particular case, a vegetable booth, covered with a blue cloth, is laden with fresh produce while overflowing baskets of lettuce crowd the floor. A number of faceless women bustle around in the background[37] while a man in a hat and long overcoat sits in the forefront. Tully's strong use of crosshatching visually intensifies the activities of the figures and reinforces the tension between the harsh pencil lines and soft washes of colour. This sense of tension is augmented by her use of compositional barriers that serve to isolate not only the viewer, who is relegated to the outskirts of the scene by means of the sharply jutting table to the right, but also the women, who are physically and psychologically separated from the dominant figure of the man to the left; a separation that is reinforced by the divisive upright poles of the awning. Thus the structure of what appears on the surface to be a simple action scene, suggests to the viewer that the sketch may also contain a "hidden agenda," and that Tully's division of the figures is not arbitrary. A brief look at some of the developments that had occurred in English painting by this time may elucidate her reasons for doing this.

By the 1880's, painting in England had undergone a number of significant alterations as a result of changing social conditions.[38] Painters of contemporary scenes such as W.P. Frith (1819-1909) and G.E. Hicks (1824-1914) had laid the groundwork for artists like Luke Fildes (1843-1927) and Hubert Herkomer (1849-1914) whose works were often aimed at exposing and eliminating social injustice. Unlike French Social Realist painting, however, the imagery of English artists rarely contained menacing political or social implications. Viewed with this in mind, it is possible that Tully may have used her sketch as a means by which comment could be offered on the real-life divisions that existed between men and women; both sharing the same environment and yet each relegated to

their separate spheres of existence. As was the custom with English artists, however, Tully's message is not overt or threatening, but subtle and implied.

The topical overtones that may be discerned in The Market, however, do not detract from its success as a simple action scene that provides the viewer with a sense of the immediacy and vibrancy that she would have encountered in the marketplaces of London. The challenge of capturing such an activity was well recognized by one art critic who commented that "an artist who attempts to paint a marketplace is courageous, especially if it is buying time..."[39]

Under Legros, who was described as a "French Realist,"[40] the Slade produced a generation of realist painters, many of whom continued their training in France,[41] which was then considered superior to England in terms of art education. One contemporary of Tully's observed:

> "Ultima Thule!" cries the art student when, at last, Paris has been reached. "Here, if anywhere, are the greatest advantages for study." ...[In Paris], surrounded by representative work of all time, [the student] is at the centre of the most active, earnest effort the present.[42]

Numerous *ateliers* such as Julian's and Colarossi's were establishing reputations for their excellent instruction of women students, particularly in study from life.[43] It was felt that in Paris women art students could lead an independent and serious working existence without outraging public opinion.[44] It is interesting to note, however, that women who did make the jump from the Slade School to Julian's or Colarossi's were thought of as having gone irretrievably to hell.[45] This was probably mainly due to the fact that, compared with their Parisian counterparts, "there was little or no bohemianism among the Slade students, either in dress, manners, or habits...."[46] The difference between the two centres was significant enough to cause one young women to write:

> It is a startling plunge, but the effect is as refreshing and revivifying as that of a cold compared to a warm bath. Make the plunge, come up, shake yourself all over, and set to work, and all your art-life you will be thankful that you have done so.[47]

The lure of Paris drew male and female art students the world over. Between the years 1867 and 1914 approximately one hundred and fifty Canadian artists, most of them born after 1850, turned to Paris for an important facet of their art education.[48] Among the better known were William Brymner (1855-1925), George Reid (1860-1947), and Robert Harris (1849-1919). It should be noted that a large percentage of these students were women,[49] many of whom, like Sydney Tully, would later become prominent figures in the Canadian art scene.[50]

Sydney Tully spent a total of three years in Paris: two years in 1886-1888, and one year in 1890, studying under Benjamin-Constant, Tony Robert-Fluery and Gustave Courtois. Since the conditions of admission to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts required that the applicant be male, fluent in French, and preferably of French birth, the independently run private studios ended up supplying most of the academic instruction to foreign students during the second half of the nineteenth century.[51] An increasing number of "ateliers feminines" or "ateliers des dames" appeared from as early as the 1850's to especially cater to the needs of female students.[52] One of the most famous and popular, and the one upon which Tully settled, was the women's section of the Academie Julian.[53] There women could work from life, or the nude, all day long just as the men did.

Julian had acquired the services of the best known academic painters of the day, each of whom would usually take under his wing one studio of men and one of women. Although Julian's system was not co-educational it was identical. In 1886 four women's ateliers were divided among the artists M. Bourguereau, Benjamin-Constant, Tony Robert-Fleury and Jules Lefebvre. Upon entering, Tully was permitted to choose among the *masters* with the result that she decided upon the *atelier* of Benjamin-Constant.[54] Benjamin-Constant visited his classes twice a week "criticizing, encouraging and inspiring the students."[55] He was considered very broad-minded, advising students to retain their own methods of expression. Indeed Benjamin-Constant's style of painting, which emphasized brilliant colour and a high degree of finish, was not adopted by Tully who, throughout her career, preferred the lower-keyed palette of the Hague School[56] and a rougher finish.

In the Parisian *ateliers*, the greatest emphasis was placed on the last stage of a student's training: painting the head of a live model. The procedure for this exercise was

constantly emphasized and felt to be worthy of a great deal of attention. A small painting by Tully entitled Portrait of Dominique, c. 1900 (fig. 3) is characteristic of the type of work required and may have been executed later, for the benefit of her own students, as a "demonstration."[57]

Beginning on a canvas stained in a neutral tone, Tully would have commenced by painting on *ebauche*, the oil paint being thinly washed on with delicate nuancing and modelling.[58] In Dominique, the weave of the canvas is clearly visible through the thinly applied paint, a characteristic of the *ebauche* that Tully was to retain in many of her works. A typical palette for the *ebauche* consisted of a limited number of pigments with the earth colours dominating because of their solidity. The *ebauche* normally took four days to complete. On the first day, a preliminary charcoal outline sketch was made. This was then traced over with red ochre diluted with turpentine. On the second day the light areas were painted in, opaque and unpasted, and the shadows recorded in a diluted and transparent tone. On days three and four, the student would work on applying the graduated series of *demi-teintes*, using at least six middle tones to link the lightest and darkest areas. The visible presence of all these steps in Dominique suggests that it was in all likelihood painted with this exercise in mind. Tully , of course, as a teacher would have executed the work much more quickly, probably beginning by brushing in the shadows, then the half-tones, concluding with the application of highlights. After the daubing on of a few "inspired brushstrokes" in the light and dark areas to enliven the surface, the *ebauche* would be complete.

Students in the *atelier*, men and women alike, would compete in weekly and monthly *concours*, or competitions, for prizes of medals, money and honourable mentions. These contests took place in the areas of drawing, composition, portraiture, and sculpture, dealing with a subject of the *master's* choice. Women almost always won the most prizes in the *concours* of the portrait.[59]

Although the method of instruction and the curriculum was identical in the men's and women's classes, the social environment of each *atelier* was significantly different. For whatever reason, whether to protect their virtue or reject male interference, the women's studios were virtually barricaded to men.

> The atelier for women is truly a fortress of the Amazons. No soul of the other sex is allowed to pass the portals save M. Julian, the masters, the models and the dealer in colours. Even the fathers and brothers who accompany the ladies to the door, are there compelled to leave them.[60]

Outside of studio hours the women also saw very little of their male peers, prompting one young art student to declare:

> ...our work is quite separate. We seldom meet, and we are too busy for any nonsense. Still, we girls find amusement in our own quiet way. Now and then we go to the theatre, when we can afford it...[61]

A typical week in an "atelier des dames" lasted from Monday to Saturday morning with the students themselves voting on their choice of model for the week. Then, according to seniority, their easels and stools were arranged around the model's podium. On Saturday afternoon the *master* would arrive for his weekly critique. The *master* spent approximately two minutes with each student;[62] not a great deal of time out of a week.

Thus, as important as the professor's comments were, one gathers that it was *atelier* life as a whole, both inside and outside the studio, that provided the real educational advantages of Paris. One student commented: "...we learn most by experience and practice, and by criticizing one another's work."[63] It was this strong sense of communal spirit which existed among the women students that lent the Parisian *atelier* experience most of its unique flavour. Without the same public social mobility as men, women art students for the most part avoided the public life of cafes and music halls which so successfully drew their male counterparts,[64] concentrating instead on the intimacy and intellectual stimulation that their own company provided.

Upon her arrival in Paris, accommodation would have been Tully's first consideration. The *pensions* preferred by the men, simply because meals were provided twice or three times daily, were often eschewed by the women who would opt for less expensive lodgings and secure an *appartement*. In an *appartement*, the bedroom, sitting-room and studio would be all in one and the occupant would provide her own cooking and housekeeping services. Living in an *appartement*, with the greater degree of autonomy it provided, was considered "romantic" and "emancipated"; it was only the less bohemianly inclined women who took up residence in the "solemn *pensions*."[65]

English, American and Canadian women students had a tendency to congregate together, becoming thoroughly acquainted in a short time. One woman proclaimed that "...companionship is one of the pleasantest bits of our student life."[66] One way in which this networking and bonding was fostered, and their independent student life celebrated, was through afternoon teas.

> When she has been in the [Latin] Quarter some little time [the female student] will probably have emancipated herself so far that she will even institute little functions in the form of studio teas or musical evenings, at which her girl and even men student friends will gather to drink *the anglaise*...How gay some of these little parties! There is true Bohemian *camaraderie* about them and the visitors who attend them.[67]

At quieter versions, the participants, usually women, would gather around the fire in the host's studio and discuss the latest exhibition; their *master's* and their own work; the chances of getting a painting accepted at the Salon; their own backgrounds and experiences; and where to spend Sunday afternoon.[68] That Sydney Tully enjoyed all of the inter-personal benefits derived from these occasions, and was aware of their integral role in a woman art student's life, is evidenced by her continuation of the studio-tea tradition with her own students upon her return to Canada.[69]

Another part of the bohemian image for many women art students was a rejection of the conventional trapping of female gentility. Part of this rejection involved the cultivation of a particular "look" that inevitability meant an indifference to dress and untidy hair.[70] Reduced living conditions were also part of the bohemian life and many women "clubbed" together, sharing rooms and cooking responsibilities. The expense of living this way was one-third of what the cheapest *pension* cost. Preparing simple dinners over small petroleum stoves had a "delightful, picnicish, hand-to-mouth flavour about it."[71] During the work-day at the *atelier*, shyness was to be avoided at all costs:

> In the ateker, excessive modesty in a woman painter is a sign of mediocrity; only the woman who forgets the conventionalities of society in pursuit of art stands a chance for distinction.[72]

All of these "bohemian" traits and characteristics were for the most part signifiers of the invisible yet cogent alliance that existed between many women art students training in Paris at this time. Dependent upon each other in a number of ways, these women regularly

looked to each other for emotional and professional support. A frequently occurring example of this was the custom of sitting for each other after hours in order to offset the expense of hiring a private model.

Sydney Tully's Lady with a Dog n.d. (fig. 4) may be an example of one such instance. In this painting a young woman is depicted seated on a high backed chair set against a bank of pink rose bushes in full bloom. She is dressed simply, in a long black skirt, white shirt and blue tie, which are just visible beneath a voluminous white overcoat. Her only concession to fashion is a colourful hat with artificial flowers. The woman's pose, combined with the simplicity of her dress, suggests that this is not a society portrait. Her left hand is hidden in her coat pocket while she rests her head thoughtfully against the right, which is supported by the high back of the chair. Her gaze is directed confidently towards the viewer. Compositionally, the painting suggests that Tully was aware of avant-garde concerns with respect to the depiction of illusory space. Tully's use of thinly applied paint that allows the canvas ground to remain visible; the deliberately awkward foreshortening of the woman's legs; and the unusual space in which the woman's hat appears to rest (not quite on her head and yet not quite part of the rose bush) all serve to frustrate the illusion of three-dimensional space in this picture. The image of the woman dominates the picture plane; her attire and facial demeanor suggesting a serious and thoughtful disposition that prompts the viewer to speculate on whether she was a friend of Tully's, and possibly an artist herself.

Although today it is felt by some art historians that women art students studying in Paris "were not socially free in the bohemian paradise,"[73] a number of contemporary accounts by and about these women suggest that in many instances they thoroughly enjoyed the independence and autonomy the Latin Quarter offered. They lived on their own, socialized with their female peers, and answered to neither father nor husband.

When Tully returned to Canada in 1888 she immediately opened up a studio modelled on the Parisian *atelier* system, and incorporated many of her experiences as a female art student into its operation. In a small but vibrant watercolour entitled Working from the Model n.d. (fig. 5),[74] Tully depicts the interior of her studio during a teaching session. The picture plane is occupied by a young female model and an equally young female student. In the background the model, dressed in a bright red dress, black jacket

and boots, sits on a chair which, resting on a raised platform, allows her to dominate the upper half of the painting. Her hands are firmly clasped in her lap while her gaze is directed away from the viewer towards the other side of the room. The woman sketching the model, whose unbound hair attests to her youth, is poised ready to make her first mark upon the blank easel that stands before her. Her figure and painting apparatus occupy the foreground and lower half of the work.

During the late nineteenth century, *atelier* scenes were popular subjects with women artists and many such paintings were exhibited between 1860 and 1900.[75] Particularly favoured were settings depicting either the artist's own studio, or the studio where she worked or attended classes with other women. In Working from the Model Tully simultaneously asserts her dual identity as artist and teacher, not by imaging herself as the instructor, but rather by allowing the viewer to see through her eyes. The anonymous student, whose face is only summarily painted, can be understood to represent a new generation of female students, while Tully remains an unseen yet powerful presence as a teacher. That the student's canvas is devoid of paint both illusory and real reinforces the fact that her canvas and Tully's are one, and hints at Tully's own progression from student to teacher.

This painting also comments on the changing status and training of Canadian women artists. In this work the viewer is presented with an image of an "atelier des dames" in Canada where a decade before there was none. Tully's own success as a woman artist is obliquely attested to by the fact that she is now the *patron* and *master* of her own *atelier* with her own students such as the young girl depicted here. In Working From the Model Tully affirms her commitment to her two chosen occupations of artist and teacher.[76]

Sydney Tully's return to Canada in 1888 was significant for a number of reasons. It marked the end of four years of training under reputable artists, and the inauguration of her professional life. That same year, at the age of 28, Tully was also rewarded and recognized by the French art establishment, which accepted one of her paintings for exhibition at the Salon.[77] Eight years later a similar honour was conferred by the British Royal Academy.[78] Although the Salon and the R.A. selection processes were being seriously questioned, official exhibiting experience still meant a great deal to the Canadian

purchasing public. Tully's conformance to her public's expectations earmarked her for a certain degree of popular and even critical success:

> These advantages [European training] combined with much natural ability and constant application, are recognized materials for the making of an artist. We expect to find Miss Tully an important factor in art progress in Toronto, possessed as she is of a liberal and progressive mind.[79]

Immediately upon her return, Tully was elected to membership in the Ontario Society of Artists and received an important portrait commission from Goldwin Smith (a painting of himself). Within two years she was granted official Canadian approval upon her election to the rank of Associate at the Royal Canadian Academy.

CHAPTER TWO

Notes

1. Elizabeth W. Champney, "Women in Art," The Quarterly Illustrator 2 (April/June 1894): 122.

2. Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Canvassing: Recollections by Six Victorian Women Artists, (London: Comden Press Ltd., 1986), 5. The aura of artistic freedom for women, which London and Paris were purported to foster, must have been, to a certain extent, based on more than just the ability to study from the nude. In the United States, the Pennsylvannia Academy of Art had run a Ladies Life Class that offered women the opportunity to draw from the nude female model since 1868 and the nude male from 1877. Christine Havice, "In A Class by Herself: Nineteenth Century Images of the Woman Artist As Student," Woman's Art Journal 2 (Spring/Summer 1981), 38.

3. Champney, "Women in Art," 212.

4. Alfred Lys Baldry, "The Work of Mrs. Allingham," Magazine of Art 23 (1899): 356.

5. Nunn, Canvassing, II.

6. Canadian art students normally chose between London and Philadelphia.

7. The Slade School of Art was founded in 1871 with the connoisseur and collector Felix Slade's endowments for a London University Chair in Fine Art and six student scholarships, and with supplementary funds provided by University College. Competitors for the scholarships could not be over nineteen years of age.

8. Anna Lea Merritt, "A Letter to Artists: especially Women Artists," Lippincott's Monthly Magazine 65 (1900): 464.

9. Charlotte Yeldham, Women Artists in Nineteenth-Century France and England. 2 Vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1984), 8.

10. Nunn, Canvassing, 4.

11. Yeldham, Women Artists, 30.

12. Laura Knight, The Magic of a Line. (London, 1965), quoted in Ibid., 25.

13. Ibid.

14. Jean Grant, "Studio and Gallery," Saturday Night (9 June 1900).

15. Grant, Saturday Night (6 January 1900).

16. Yeldham, Women Artists, 31.

17. Helene L. Postlethwaite in "Some Noted Women - Painters," Magazine of Art, 18 (1895): 17, mentions Henrietta Rae, Jessie Macgregor, Anna Lea Merritt, and Lucy Kemp-Welch, just to name a few.

18. In 1884 Henrietta Rae (b. 1859), who had commenced her art training at the age of thirteen, had a large figure study entitled Lancelot and Elaine hung "on the line" at that year's Royal Academy exhibition.

19. Merritt, "Letter," 464.

20. Nunn, Canvassing, 11.

21. Merritt, "Letter," 468.

22. Nunn, Canvassing, 12.

23. Such as Digby Williams, Henrietta Ward, and Louise Jopling. Yeldham, Women Artists, 35.

24. Charlotte J. Weeks, "Women At Work: The Slade Girls," Magazine of Art 6 (1883): 329; and Hilary Taylor, " 'If a young painter be not fierce and arrogant God...help him:' Some women art students at the Slade, c. 1895-1899," Art History 9:2 (June 1986): 232-244.

25. Legros was born in Dijon, France in 1837. As a youth he was apprentice to the scene painter C.A. Cambon before becoming a pupil at the *atelier* of Lecoq de Boisbaudran (master of both Fantin-Latour and L'Hermitte), whose regime of drawing from memory was famous for its severity and success. Legros made his debut at the Salon of 1857 with a portrait of his father. Thereafter he exhibited regularly but with only limited success. After further disappointments Legros decided in 1863 to accept the invitation of his friend Whistler to go to England. Here he was immediately successful and was eventually offered the valuable post, in 1876, of Professor of Fine Art at the Slade School. His works were dominated by religious genre and grotesquely imaginative scenes. He was also an accomplished etcher, sculptor and medallist. Legros died in London in 1911.

26. At the Slade, women were not allowed to study from the nude until around 1898; and for the first year at least, separate classes were held for women to work from the draped living model. It was felt that "this class is especially adapted for ladies who cannot of course work from the nude model," Yeldham, Women Artists, notes to Chapter One, pg. 12. Many women, however, circumvented this by joining together and sharing the expense of conducting such a class in the privacy of their own studios.

27. The other two were the Royal Academy Schools and the South Kensington Schools (now the Royal College of Art).

28. The College Calender for 1871 stated that "in the Slade Schools, the study of the living model will be considered of the first and paramount importance, the study of the Antique being put in second place, and used as a means of improving the style of the students from time to time." Yeldham, Women Artists, 52.

29. Champney, "Women in Art," 116.

30. William Rothenstein, "Recollections: The Slade School," Artwork 5 (Summer 1929): 77.

31. Charlotte Weeks refers to the school's women students as "The Slade Girls" in her article (see f.n. 23).

32. A textured drawing paper which came in a variety of tints.

33. "Stippling" is a process by which volume is built up by means of minute dots.

34. Weeks, "Slade Girls," 326.

35. Weeks, "Slade Girls," 327.

36. Ibid.

37. Tully produced a number of works in which women, labouring at unpaid work, are depicted as anonymous, faceless beings. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

38. Howard David Rodee, Scenes of Rural and Urban Poverty in Victorian Painting and Their Development, 1850 to 1890. (U.M.I. Dissertation Information Service, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1975).

39. Jean Grant, "Studio and Galley," Saturday Night (24 March 1900).

40. As other artists around him were avoiding narrative in preference of formal experiments, Legros carved a niche for himself among the "peasant painters" as a subspecialist in religious genre. Legros' images were rigid and planar with a strong suggestion of the primitive. Hallmarks of his visual vocabulary included flatness, isolation and lack of interaction, which were a visual corollary of his own self-imposed artistic and social isolation. Alex Seltzer, "Alphonse Legros: Waiting For the Ax to Fall," Arts Magazine 62 (January 1988): 41-42.

41. Bruce Laughton: The Slade: 1871-1971. (London: Royal Academy of Arts Diploma Galleries, 1971), 5.

42. Phebe D. Nutt, "Paris Art-Schools," Lippincott's Magazine 27 (1881): 269.

43. Yeldham, Women Artists, 37.

44. Gertrude Massey, in King, Commoners and Me (London, 1934) regarding her life as an art student in London during the 1880's wrote: "A careful and thorough study of the nude is a practical and very necessary method towards rapid and

genuine progress in art. In our day, however, girls were expected to paint portraits, still-life groups, landscapes, and all that sort of thing, but we were certainly not expected to study from the nude. In fact, it was almost a crime to mention the word nude". Quoted in Yeldham, Women Artists, 34.

45. Lady Kathleen Kennet, Self-Portrait of An Artist (London, 1951); quoted in Yeldham, Women Artists, 37.

46. Rothnstein, "Recollections," 84.

47. Alice Greene, "The Girl-Student in Paris," Magazine of Art 6 (1883): 286.

48. David Wistow, Canadians in Paris 1867-1914 (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1979). 4. Instruction in the *ateliers* was divided into three basic areas: elementary drawing; drawing and painting from the live model; and compositional studies (sketches and copying). Typically a student began by copying engravings, followed by drawings in charcoal of plaster casts. The transition from copying engravings to copying casts was known as passing "*a la bosse*"; *bosse* being the term for plaster casts during the nineteenth century. In *ateliers* such as Julian's, the *bosse* was understood as the proper intermediary between drawing from engravings and drawing from life. Copying a cast was designed to heighten the student's awareness of the effects of light and shade; the goal being to master the subtle graduation of tonal values known as *demi-teintes*. Once pupils had mastered drawing from the cast and demonstrated a thorough understanding of *demi-teintes* they were assigned a place before the live model. This step was known as passing "*a la nature*" and represented the most significant advance preceding painting instruction. Drawing from the live model was the aspect of training upon which students devoted themselves the most. When the master visited his *atelier*, he primarily directed his attention to the figure drawings, looking for faulty draughtsmanship such as proportional or anatomical defects. Once drawing was mastered, the student was then permitted to use paint. The pupil would begin by painting a head, initially from either a work specifically executed for this purpose by the professor, or from older works in the Louvre.

49. From a list of 82 artists who studied in Paris, 42% were women. From Ibid., 48.

50. Especially Florence Carlyle, Elizabeth Forbes, Harriet Ford, Mary Riter Hamilton and Laura Muntz.

51. Nikolaus Pevsner, Academies of Art: Past and Present (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 226.

52. Yeldham, Women Artists, 51.

53. Rudolphe Julian, a minor *genre* and portrait painter, opened his first studio in 1868 in an old dance hall in the Passage des Panoramas. He provided students who aspired to the Ecole with a place where they could work freely without restriction. As the *atelier's* popularity and enrollment grew Julian opened different branches each one under the auspices of an Academician. By 1886 Julian operated nine different studios, four of which were exclusively for women. Julian's had distinct

advantages that attracted a number of Canadian and foreign students. There were no language requirements or age restrictions, and the studios were open six days a week from eight o'clock in the morning until nightfall; most other studios closed during the afternoon. Students were also free to do as they pleased; they were not compelled to enter the monthly competitions nor to be present when the professors made their rounds. M. Riccardo Nobili, "The Academie Julian," Cosmopolitan Magazine 8 (1886): 747.

54. Jean Joseph Benjamin-Constant was born in Paris in 1845 spending his youth in Toulouse where he entered the Ecole there. In 1866 he made his way to Paris and entered the Ecole des Beaux Arts, spending a total of eight years. In 1867 he also began studying at the *atelier* of Alexandre Cabanel, making his Salon debut in 1869. Benjamin-Constant fought in the war of 1870 and afterwards travelled in Spain and Algeria. On a trip to Morocco, the brilliant sunshine and gorgeous colouring of the native dress had a decisive effect on his painting of the 1870's which were mainly Orientalist in inspiration. During the 1880's Benjamin-Constant turned more towards portraiture and decorative painting. He died in Paris in 1902.

55. J. Murry Templeton, "Benjamin-Constant," Magazine of Art 14 (1891): 187.

56. The Hague School, which is discussed at greater length in the next Chapter, consisted of a loosely-knit group of Dutch landscape and *genre* painters active circa 1860-1890.

57. At the Slade, Alphone Legros, who never mastered the English language, had frequently taught by demonstration: "It was a momentous event for the students when Legros, once a term at least, painted a head before the whole school. Practical demonstration is unquestionably the most inspiring method of teaching. Legros had a masterly way of constructing a head by the simplest possible means ... This is the part of his criticism that remains most clearly in my memory." Rothenstein, "Recollections," 78. Legros at work was considered a sight worth seeing. As he drew and painted before his class, the vigour with which he seized not only the outline and salient features of the model but also the whole solid structure was deemed remarkable. The students would eagerly gather around him during these famous "demonstrations" and Legros would show them from beginning to end how to proceed when painting from the live model. Weeks, "Slade Girls," 325.

58. The following discussion is based on Albert Boime's book The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century (London: Phaidon Press, Ltd., 1971) 27-40.

59. Nobili, "Academie Julian," 749.

60. Ibid., 751.

61. Quoted in D.M. Craik, "A Paris Atelier," Good Words 27 (1886): 311

62. Ibid., 309.

63. Ibid.

64. For an interesting comparison of the differences that existed between the lifestyles of men and women art students in Paris see Clive Holland, "Student Life in the Quarter Latin, Paris," Studio 27 (1902): 33-40; and Clive Holland, "Lady Art Students' Life in Paris," Studio 30 (1903): 225-233.

65. Holland, "Lady Art Students'," 227.

66. Craik, "Paris Atelier," 311.

67. Holland, "Lady Art Students'," 227.

68. Craik, "Paris Atelier," 311. The importance of the tea-party is also mentioned in Alice Green's article "The Girl-Student in Paris," Magazine of Art 6 (1883): 287.

69. "The afternoon tea given at the studio of Miss Tully by her pupils on last Saturday afternoon was a very smart and interesting affair. The studio was thronged during the whole afternoon, and a dainty lot of artistes received and waited upon the numerous guests. Admiring comments were heard on the works of Miss Hagarty, Miss Heaven, Miss Sullivan and several other fair students whose artistic efforts adorned the walls of the studio. A rather unique and startling figure was that of a skeleton decked with a buttonhole bouquet of scarlet flowers and holding a cigarette in his ugly jaws! It gave me a cold shiver to see a blithe and bonnie maiden gently shake his boney fingers and greet him as a "sweet old fellow." "Social and Personal," Saturday Night (22 April 1893). It should be noted that this article appeared in the "gossip" section of Saturday Night and the reviewer's choice of adjectives was characteristic of her column. (There was also a skeleton in the women's atelier at Julian's, Havice, "Class by Herself," 38.)

70. D.M. Craik in "Paris Atelier," 309, wrote of women art students in 1886: "They did not look particularly tidy, having on their working-clothes - an apron and sleeves grimed with chalk, charcoal, and paint - but all looked intelligent, busy and happy." She went on to comment that the hardworking student who put "her whole soul in her work, scorns such a small thing as outward appearance, and her dress, once aesthetic, looks like a worn-out robe de chambre, slowly melting into a bundle of rags." On the other hand the "harmless, imbecile, but lady-like student" who "cannot draw" [and] never expects to be able to do so" was "always nicely dressed, always humble, and always a trifle silly." E.OE. Sommerville, "An 'Atelier Des Dames'," Magazine of Art 9 (1886): 154.

71. Somerville, "Atelier Des Dames," 155.

72. Quoted in Jo Ann Wein, "The Parisian Training of American Women Artists," Woman's Art Journal 2 (Spring/Summer 1981): 42.

73. J. Diane Radyki in her article "The Life of Lady Art Students: Changing Art Education at the Turn of the Century," Art Journal 42/3 (Spring 1982): 9-13, states that "... if there was a bohemian way of life for 'lady art students,' it was not their fraternization with men, but their banding together to fight discriminatory education..." Radyki does not discuss in what ways she found women "not

socially free," but the implication is there that it was because women art students were rarely sexually promiscuous and tended not to frequent cafes and music halls but pursued their studies instead. Although a number of French women artists were busy fighting the establishment, visiting English, American and Canadian students seemed to enjoy themselves in Paris's more liberal atmosphere.

74. I believe this work depicts Tully's Canadian atelier for a number of reasons: the size of the studio is far too small to have been Constant's in Paris and the girls themselves too young. The fact that the work has survived in Canada also suggests that it was executed here.

75. Yeldham, Women Artists, 238.

76. Women were not alone in favouring the arts and artists as themes for their works. The artist occupied a central place in Romantic thought as the supreme embodiment of feeling and emotion and was frequently the subject of paintings and poems. Nonetheless, while the artist was of general interest during the nineteenth century, the woman artist was of particular interest to women. Yeldham, Women Artists, 240.

77. In 1888 Tully exhibited Etude at that years Salon, being then only the eighth Canadian woman to receive this honour; Sylvain Allaire, "Les Canadiens au Salon Officiel de Paris Entre 1870 Et 1910: Sections Peinture et Dessin," Journal of Canadian Art History 4 (1977/78): 141-154.

78. In 1896 Tully exhibited Contemplation at the Royal Academy Exhibition, and in 1897 Phoebe. Algernon Graves, The Royal Academy of Arts, "A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Works From Its Foundation in 1769 to 1904." (London: S.R. Publishers Ltd. & Kingsmead Reprints, 1970). Vol. 4, 27.

79. Jean Grant, "Studio and Gallery," Saturday Night (10 December 1898).

CHAPTER THREE

THE HOARDING OF THE ACTUAL

Style is the dress of thought

LORD CHESTERFIELD

To sit on the bank of a stream and literally transcribe on canvas the surrounding view of land and trees and water is no more a work of art than a tailor's advertisement in a daily newspaper. A picture, to be named as such from the true artist's view, must have soul, feeling and ideality. It must suggest something more than a mere portrayal of surrounding objects.[1]

The focus of late nineteenth century artists on what that "something more" should constitute can be seen as a common denominator linking the plurality of styles that co-existed during this period;[2] each one dealing with issues of modern life differently. For example, opposing perceptual modes, such as those of the Impressionist and the Pompier painters, share a fundamental interest in verity, a concern that had its roots in mid-century Realism.[3] Both modes address the problem of "intense realism": on the one hand the reality of process, and on the other the reality of thought and imagination.[4] In other words, both groups share an overriding concern for the "real," or as art historian, Phoebe Pool, describes it: the "hoarding of the actual."[5] Most artists during this time, however, adopted a moderate position between the extremes of Impressionism and Academic art. Sydney Tully was no exception, perhaps being best identified a *juste milieu* artist.[6]

As formative as Tully's English and French training was, her mature style and contribution to Canadian art were not the result of these experiences alone. Another decisive influence (not strictly related to her education) that affected Tully's style and choice of subject matter was her practice of frequently seeking out the rural villages of Holland for artistic retreats. Like many other women artists during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Tully preferred the experience and opportunities provided by the Netherlands over the primitive towns of coastal Brittainy which attracted so many of her male peers. Tully's interest in Holland probably began with summer sketching trips made during her student days at the Academie Julian, culminating in lengthier stays later on in life.[7] Although a "quiet revolution" compared to the Impressionist movement, the Dutch artistic milieu, as exemplified by the Hague School, similarly encouraged artists to deal with the "realities" of modern life albeit from a different perceptual mode. The impact of this school was significant not only because it influenced a number of Canadian artists but also because it was a school much favoured by important sectors of the Canadian art purchasing public.

This chapter will explore the *juste milieu* qualities of Tully's style within the context of nineteenth century Canadian and Western European art. Of particular interest is her approach to the "real." Although active as a landscapist, Tully was better known for her figure paintings and in this respect was typical of a number of Canadian figurative artists between 1880 and 1910.[8] The swiftness with which the Canadian environment was being developed, both agriculturally and industrially, during this period cultivated social and political impulses that led many concerned urban Canadians to reexamine their relationship to nature. Interestingly, it was also during these years that greater emphasis, by artists and public alike, was placed on the role of the human figure in Canadian art. Possible reasons for this will be examined in this chapter.[9]

Although Impressionism is usually considered to be the first modernist *avant-garde* movement, defining the movement in terms of a shared style or subject is extremely difficult.[10] Common to all Impressionist artists, however, was the production of paintings that initially alienated most of the viewing and purchasing public: their palettes tended to be highly keyed and their finish rough; they generally painted small canvases out-of-doors, and were interested in the play of light and the resulting fragmentation of objects; and for the most part, they eschewed illusory space and pictorial verisimilitude. The movement peaked during the decade 1870-1880, eight years before Tully lived in Paris. By the time she had settled there, the artists had all gone their separate ways and Impressionism was no longer considered shocking, having become "the house style of the haute bourgeoisie."[11]

The full impact of Impressionism did not reach North America until much later, first becoming popular in the United States circa 1885-1890 and in Canada around 1900. Artists living in Canada who had studied in Paris were placed in an odd position in that they dealt with a public who were for the most part not aesthetically prepared for the intellectual and visual rigours of Impressionism. Many sectors of that public felt that there was something shallow about the way the Impressionists confined painting to purely visual sensations. For such viewers the abolition of physical things seemed to result in a form of painting without imagination. One Canadian critic summed up the concern:

> For imagination is the well-spring of all art. Without it, pigment upon canvas is so much pigment misplaced.[12]

Perhaps partially in response to the reactionary nature of the Canadian art market, a number of artists, particularly women, found themselves inspired by the Hague School, a now little-known, but then tremendously popular, movement.[13] Contemporaries of the Impressionists, the Hague School experienced a greater longevity, remaining a force until the outbreak of the First World War. The School's continuing appeal was probably based on the fact that they emphasized the object, human conditions, and single-point perspective, all of which catered to a much broader cross-section of society.[14] The two movements, however, did possess a number of similar concerns. Both were characterized by: their reaction against academic painting; an exploration of pictorial space as a vehicle for expression; an interest in the atmospheric effects of light; painting *en plein air*; loose, expressive brushwork; and an essentially passive approach to their subject matter.

The roots of the Hague School can be traced back to the 1850's, but their "heyday" was between the years 1880 and 1910. During this period they emerged with a distinctive style and subject matter. Unlike the Impressionists, the Hague School deliberately sought to express the subjective experience of the outside world by basing their works on the careful observation of natural phenomena. Painters of the Hague School favoured two *genres*: landscapes and figurative works, executed in subdued colour combinations.[15] When dealing with human issues, they adopted a passive approach, often nostalgic and frequently sentimental. Although they were careful not to infuse their work with any overt social criticism, the decision not to comment on their subject matter must in itself be understood as an ideological position.[16] The Hague School avoided any attempt to capture a "snapshot" or impression of the natural or modern world, preferring to project temporal concerns as lasting and unchanging. They deliberately ignored fashionable life, cities and modern experiences. Structurally the compositions of the Hague School differ significantly from Impressionist works in that they continued to focus on a *motif* in the centre of the canvas. Because they frequently employed cropping, which creates the impression of a brief glance, there exists a tension in their works between the static quality of the central *motif* and the sense of flux created by cropping, free brushwork and atmospheric painting. Some Canadians considered these artists to be Impressionists in the truest sense of the word.[17]

Like the Impressionists, the Hague School were primarily interested in light effects as experienced under changing atmospheric conditions. Their palettes, however, were

severely limited, restricted to greens, brown and greys. These restrained tones became a distinguishing feature of the group and of Tully's style as well.[18] The goal of the Hague School was to consolidate all the colours on the canvas surface, no matter how strong, in order to create the impression of a unified "warm fragrant grey,"[19] which was similar to Tully's use of mossy or olive greens. The fundamental difference between Impressionism and the Hague School was ideological. To the Hague School the study of nature -- the basis of all art -- was the sole foundation upon which the artist must build.[20] Their works for the most part espoused a sober realism and stark simplicity, or scenes of "violent or sulky nature,"[21] while their grey palette further enhanced the impression of aesthetic and psychological alienation. Occasionally this sense of alienation figures in Tully's genre scenes, where it seems to relate to the issue of gender differences.[22] Tully's use of "warm grey" or "blue-green tones" and her tendency towards "soft-toned...truthful bits" and "excellent mist effects" while "striving for effects of atmosphere and light" were always favorably observed. Similarly she was variously designated by critics as being an "intuitive," "spiritual" painter who "enters into keenest sympathy, not with the externals of her subject, but with their subconscious life. All her work has the touch of spirituality."[23]

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Hague School's popularity steadily increased, particularly in international circles. Their works were considered obligatory in leading collections and international exhibitions. Furthermore, they inevitably received admiring reviews in leading art magazines.[24] During the years 1885 to 1914, the vogue for visiting Holland peaked:

> After Paris, more of our art students go for instruction to the Netherlands than to any other country in Europe, drawn doubtless, by the excellence of the academies, the vitality of the modern Dutch artists and the exquisite Dutch landscapes.[25]

Although this was written about Americans, young Canadian artists were also expected to study in the Netherlands.[26] Throughout the nineties Canadian artists, primarily women, frequently spent their summers sketching and painting in Holland.[27] For example in the summer of 1899 no less than nine Canadian women artists were travelling throughout the Netherlands.[28] Foreign artists often hoped to find the past in Holland, where everything was said to be fifty years behind the times. Its relatively late industrialization led to a view of the Netherlands as generally unspoiled. Significantly, the

Netherlands were viewed as genteel counterparts to Britanny and the South Seas, which were the untouched landscapes more often favoured by the artists of French and German *avant-garde* movements:

> The physical features, the atmospheric conditions, so different from elevated sunny lands, the picturesqueness and quaintness and ancientness of its buildings and customs, make it always a land for artists and for congenial subjects. It is eminently an atelier for the study of tone values and richness of colour. So to go to Holland is the ambition of many artists.[29]

One of the most popular of the Dutch villages was Dordrecht, also known as Dort. A landscape entitled Knalhaven, Dordrecht 1907 (fig. 6) was painted by Tully during her lengthy visit to the Netherlands from 1906-1908. It is interesting to compare this scene to another landscape probably painted during those years, Flaxtree, Oak Walk, Jersey n.d. (fig. 7).[30] The latter, much more conventional in approach, is essentially Barbizon in both style and composition[31].

In Flaxtree, Oak Walk, Jersey, Tully painted a candid, unidealized scene of the Jersey countryside where nature easily absorbs any human effort to restructure it (indicated by the small size of gate at the lower left). Such compositions tend to suggest that the balance that exists between the permanent and the transitory is weighted against humankind. In this tradition Tully placed her *motif* of the large flax tree in the centre of the canvas. To a certain extent she also limits the level of human interference, denying the viewer access to the scene by means of the screen of bushes in the immediate foreground.

While the Hague School was a significant influence on Tully she was also tempted to experiment with Impressionist devices as in, for example, Knalhaven, Dordrecht.[32] In this scene, the horizon line is so high that it is virtually nonexistent and thus allows the spectator unrestricted access to the imagery. The play of light on the water and the building roofs suggest movement and evanescese, and yet strong vertical and horizontal components dominate the scene at both the fore and background levels. Tully's animated brushwork, which functions impressionistically to dissolve matter, is checked by the presence of solid architectonic elements. Although Tully never abandoned perspective in her works, she frequently compressed or undermined it as she has done here with the strong vertical of the partially submerged log in the foreground, which becomes attached to

the buildings in the background thus eliminating the space in between. Like a number of other artists at this time Tully appears to have been intrigued by the structure and not just the impression of the visible world. Knalhaven, Dordrecht , however experimental, would not have been so *avant-garde* that it would have alienated the conservative Canadian public. In Toronto there was a definite market for works that evoked a Dutch style or subject.[33] Enormous prices were paid for paintings by leading Dutch artists and works that recreated these Netherlandish tendencies could command hundreds of dollars.

Although Tully painted a number of landscapes throughout her career, it was for the painting of figures that she was most frequently praised by critics. In this area too, the influence of the Hague School is discernable in Tully's emphasis on the subjective, the psychological and the alienated. All of these hallmarks of the Hague School fully suited the types of figurative work she selected. It should be noted that Tully's activity as a figurative painter was part of a larger trend in the late nineteenth century Ontario art scene. In 1889 the call went out for artists who would depict Canadians rather than Canada:

> It is a pity more of our painters do not seem capable of utilizing some of the charming and powerful compositions which Canadian rural life affords at any time of year, but especially in summer. There may be found men - tall, square-shouldered, hard with toil and brown with sun,...and women the very embodiment of picturesquesness and native grace...[34]

The reasons for this shift towards *genre* painting, and the role women artists played in it, are interesting to explore.

Until the 1880's and 1890's landscape painting, with few exceptions, had unproblematically dominated the Canadian art scene.[35] Increasingly, however, it was being used by government and business to legitimize and promote their economic interests in Canada's west. Government national economic policies from this period were largely based on the exploitation of Canada's natural resources; policies that were predicated on the idea that Canada possessed a storehouse of unlimited natural wealth.[36] Furthermore, the economic survival of the privately owned Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) similarly depended upon the successful settlement and commercial development of the vast plain that lay between Portage la Prairie and the Rocky Mountains, since this would lead to an

increased demand for CPR freight and passenger services.[37] Even foreigners at this time commented upon the Canadian preoccupation with the economic:

> The commercial idea is still supreme in Canada - it excludes higher ideals and interests. The Canadians, as a people, despise the arts, either painting, music or literature, because art is not a road to wealth... the only things which are really interesting to Canadians today are politics, railroads, real estate, Manitoba wheat, and "having a good time."[38]

With financial backing from the government, the CPR, then managed by William Van Horne, launched an impressive campaign to advance investment and settlement in the West. Provided with free transportation, artists were encouraged to travel out West to paint the panoramic scenery which suggested the abundance of opportunities available in the new frontier. A number of landscapists, such as Lucius O'Brien (1832-1899), John Fraser (1838-1898) and John Forbes (1846-1925), who painted in the manner of the American Hudson River School,[39] were quickly and eagerly recruited by Van Horne. Their large, grandiose, highly-finished and detailed panoramic views were ideal for the CPR's purposes. When the line was finished in 1885, the company was deluged with requests from artists, and by 1889 the Canadian art market was flooded with northwestern landscapes. Critics soon began calling for an end to so many "Rocky Mountain potboilers."[40]

Undaunted by such criticisms, Canadian railroad magnates and corporate leaders who were amassing incredible fortunes at this time, continued to patronize these artists whose works culturally endorsed their exploitation of the landscape. In other words, the painted image gave cultural expression to a particular Canadian ideology of landscape that was at that time largely economically determined.[41] Ironically, because of the glut of landscape paintings unwittingly created by the CPR's corporate sponsorship program, the *genre* lost much of its prestige:

> The present tendency is to go to landscapes of all sorts...[which are] being produced by the hundred. They are so common that they are low-priced, so insipid that the public refuses to be interested.[42]

This change in the status of landscape painting subsequently paved the way for a more positive public response to figure paintings. This glut of landscapes, however, was not the only reason for a surge of interest in figure painting.

Also influential was a new appreciation of nature by many Canadians, who were increasingly recognizing nature's non-econonic values. The period from 1890's - 1910's witnessed intense industrialization, urbanization and materialism, all of which led to changing attitudes towards nature on the part of many urbanite Canadians.[43] City-living was considered to be one of the most important causes of stress, and "worry" had become the "disease of the age."[44] By 1900 Canada had also experienced a demographic revolution of enormous proportions.[45] A number of Canadians responded unfavorably to such rapid urbanization and considered city-life artificial with its monotony and alienation. Thousands of urban dwellers actively sought to "get back to nature"[46] and share in the expertness of rural life. Images of country-life were a visual fulfillment of this desire.

Although the desire of many middle- and upper-class Canadians to reunite with nature was partly romantic, environmental concerns were also a factor. For example, the increasing rate of the destruction of Canadian forests raised questions about the notion of unlimited abundance. Sydney Tully's emphasis on rural life in her *genre* scenes may have participated in shaping such "back-to-nature" sentiments. Certainly images of urban views and pleasures that so intrigued the Impressionists in France were not typical of Canadian *genre* painters.[47]

Instead, Canadian critics identified a need for the artist "who will tell a story of human life on canvas."[48] Such a person, it was felt, would be found among the younger generation of Canadian artists: "Some of the younger artists, both men and women, seem to be moving along the right line. The women are especially in evidence, their work showing a strong sense of public interest."[49] It is interesting to speculate why women artists were being singled out for extra praise. Perhaps they were exhibiting proportionately more *genre* paintings than their male peers, since traditionally women were deemed to be more sympathetic to the human experience (particularly domestic and maternal ones) because of their long-standing roles as nurturers. For example, one of Tully's peers, Laura Muntz Lyall (1860-1930) established a reputation and cornered a market for herself as a very successful painter of children: "[Miss Muntz] is essentially

womanly in her conceptions, excelling most in figures of women and children."[50] Most of Tully's other female contemporaries were also extremely active in the area of figure and *genre* painting: Florence Carlyle, Mary Dignam, Mary Bell Eastlake, Harriet Ford, Clara Hagarty, and Mary Wrinch Reid were repeatedly reviewed in Saturday Night magazine with respect to their contributions in this area.

As the number of active women artists in Ontario increased, their output received more attention from the critics. This prompted Jean Grant, art critic for Saturday Night, to write: "There is no city, perhaps in the Dominion, which contains so large a number of ladies to whom the study of art is not merely a delightful pastime but a serious study, as we are fortunate enough to possess in Toronto."[51] It is interesting to note that the recognition these women received during their lifetime stands in sharp contrast to their later neglect. The subsequent historical negation of this first generation of women artists, whose contributions have been eliminated from present-day written histories of Canadian art, was virtually assured when figurative art too fell out of favour.[52]

The evolution of this brief figurative tradition in Canada can also be explained by the fact that most of the artists of Tully's generation had studied abroad in England and France where, as we have been seen, emphasis on the human figure was still an integral part of the academic training process. When these young Canadians began returning to Canada in the 1880's, the nature of Canadian painting also began to change. Although the establishment continued to support Academic landscapists, *genre* painters received more and more popular and critical acclaim:

> Canadian artists are commencing to grapple, and successfully too, with the more difficult branches of art which entail the employment of living and moving figures. Heretofore the endless succession of lifeless landscapes made our exhibitions exceedingly monotonous to all but those whose interest was technical.[53]

By the end of the century, artists throughout Canada were painting *genre* scenes.[54] By far the most newsworthy were the artists who, like Robert Harris (1849-1919), Paul Peel (1860-1891), and George Reid (1860-1947) painted on an extremely large scale. Although popular, these large canvases were expensive to paint and purchase.

In this respect, Tully differed from her male peers, preferring to paint on a smaller scale. There could have been a number of reasons for this. In economic terms Tully's income may have been limited thus necessitating modest paint and canvas expenditures. Similarly, her purchasing public's financial means may have allowed for only less expensive and therefore smaller paintings. Furthermore, on an aesthetic level Tully's personal preference for painting *en plein air* would have demanded small, portable canvases. Finally, while she was studying in Paris her exposure to works by the Impressionists (whose partiality towards undersized paintings was partly an act of rebellion against the oversized works of the Pompiers) may have also affected her preferences. With regard to her subject matter, Tully also differed from Harris and Reid in her choice of women and domestic scenes not limited solely to the Canadian experience.

Such differences are important to consider further despite the fact that they are all indications of Tully's *juste milieu* label. To illustrate such differences it is useful to compare George Reid's[55] The Forclosure of the Mortgage, 1893 (180.3 x 276.9 cm) (fig.8), which is typical of his work during the 1880's and 1890's, with Sydney Tully's Jeanne, 1898 (38 x 46 cm) (fig. 9). Reid's painting is for the most part academic in approach, being large, detailed and highly finished. Painted from a studio prop, The Forclosure of the Mortgage was intended to be viewed as an episode from Canadian life and designed to appeal directly to the spectator. The open foreground of the painting and the dejected, outward gaze of the old patriarch draws the viewer in; the triangular groupings of the figures, and the dramatic light-and-shade effects, are all compositional devices regularly employed by Academic painters. Tully's Jeanne on the other hand is much smaller and was probably painted, as was her habit, *in situ* during a summer painting retreat to rural Quebec. The figure of Jeanne dominates the picture plane confronting the viewer, while the subject of this work, the unidealized representation of a young woman involved in a simple household chore, is similarly unacademic. Tully's brushwork is also looser and compositionally the painting is not as traditional as the triangular configurations of Reid's subjects. Subsequent works by Tully, such as Harvest c. 1906 (fig. 10) or Mother and Child c. 1908 (fig. 11), reveal the extent to which Tully would later totally reject academic principles: both works are very loosely painted and the illusory space in Mother and Child, although not distorted, is severely compressed.

In a number of ways, however, Tully's painting parallels Reid's: both depict contemporary scenes from Canadian life, and like Reid, Tully has not undermined the illusion of three-dimensional space through perspectival distortion. Both The Forclosure of the Mortgage and Jeanne were popular works with the critics and purchasing public, Jeanne being acquired by the Ontario Government to form part of its provincial collection.[56]

Tully seems to have maintained a discreet but noticeable distance from the style of the Pompier painters, far more so than did the leading male *genre* painters, Robert Harris, Paul Peel and George Reid. Although receiving virtually the same academic training, which transmitted to each artist a technical ability of the highest order,[57] every artist developed and responded to that ability differently. Certainly academic artists were highly regarded, and well-paid, by many circles of society until the end of the First World War.[58] These artists, through a combination of classic forms, high finish, surface realism and sentimentality, developed an art form that appealed directly and powerfully to the emotions of its many enthusiasts.[59] To many bourgeois and aristocratic patrons, *finis* was understood as a pledge of social responsibility and the work ethic, while a painterly, more spontaneous-looking approach contradicted these values.[60] Rebellious artists challenged the notion of finishing, choosing instead to emphasize the physical properties of the paint. This shift in emphasis from "what" to "how" had a decided effect on Tully's style.

Contemporaneity, or being *Il faut etre de son temps*,[61] involved the use of a different perceptual mode that required the active intellectual participation of the viewer. The feeling of direct experience was created by a range of devices that included a close-up point of view; the depiction of fragments of nature rather than constructed panoramic vistas; and the deliberate affirmation of paint, canvas and two-dimensional surface. All of these devices were seen as hallmarks of contemporaneity and all are found in the works of Sydney Strickland Tully. For artists such as Tully, traditional visual schemata and conventional attitudes had to be avoided in order to present viewers with new insights into standard subjects. In particular, any technique that emphasized the two-dimensional aspect of painting usefully drew attention to the spectator's role. The obvious physical presence of the paint and the compositional distortion of perspective meant the painting was no longer an invisible mediator between the spectator and the illusion of the third dimension,

but instead created a tension between the two. The use of such devices was considered more faithful to reality because they exposed the artificiality of representational painting.[62]

Sydney Tully, as is the case with any *juste milieu* painter, is not easily pigeon-holed into a particular style, school or movement. The approach she adopted in her own exploration of the relationship between reality and the painted surface falls within the stylistic extremes of the Pompier and the *avant-garde*. She was a conservative but versatile artist, part of a group of Canadian women who supported the advances then being made in the Netherlands. In a setting newly receptive to a reintroduction of figure painting and *genre* scenes in Canada, these artists sifted through, combined and redefined many of the latest trends to create a body of work characterized by a "distinct and marked individuality."[63]

CHAPTER THREE

Notes

1. "Condition of Art in Canada," The Week (18 January 1895): 177.

2. Artistic movements of the second half of the nineteenth century included: Realism (Social, Academic, Pre-Raphaelite and Victorian); Impressionism; Hague School Realism; Symbolism; and Post-Impressionism.

3. *Pompier* is the term increasingly being used by art historians to describe nineteenth-century state-supported artists who were usually members of the Academie des Beaux-Arts. Their works were large, incredibly detailed and highly finished. Built upon extensive documentary research of animal and human anatomy, Pompier paintings also emphasized subtle gradations of colour and tone and were extemely illusionistic. See James Harding, Artistes Pompiers: French Academic Art in the Nineteenth Century (London: Academy Editions, 1979).

4. In 1881 the artist Phebe Natte wrote: "Intense realism is the prevailing characteristic of the modern French school: paint what you please, but let it be exactly like what it represents..." "Paris Art-Schools," Lippincott's Magazine 27 (1881): 275.

5. Phoebe Pool writes: "From one point of view the movement [Impressionism] can be seen as an expression of that highly characteristic nineteenth-century feeling for ... precise delineation and hoarding of the actual... The philosophical climate, realistic and pragmatic, was encouraging to this kind of art..." Impressionism (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967): 263.

6. A review of the 1888 Salon in which Tully was an exhibitor reveals that the exhibition was marked by the absence of works "by the most extreme partisans of the *impressioniste* and *liminariste* factions." Instead there were a number of works by those who followed them at a distance without breaking altogether with the Academies. These artists showed "themselves able to apply the results of their study of the qualities and gradations of light, and of open air effects generally, with a certain independence..." Claude Phillips, "The Salon," Magazine of Art II (1888): 338.

7. This speculation is based on the habit of full-time students withdrawing from Paris during the summer months to sketch and paint *en plein air* in rural areas. Upon her return to Canada in 1888 Tully exhibited a work entitled Un hollandais at the Royal Canadian Academy suggesting that she had visited Holland.

8. Although the following *genre* painters did not limit themselves solely to figure painting, they were most often reviewed at exhibitions for such work: Charlotte

Mount Brock Schreiber; Sydney Strickland Tully; Gertrude Spurr; Florence Carlyle; Laura Muntz; Clara Hagarty; Robert Harris, George Reid; Paul Peel; William Brymner.

9. A discussion of the shifting attitudes toward the exploitation of Canada's natural resources may be found in George Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada: 1893-1914," Journal of Canadian Studies II (August 1976).

10. Phoebe Pool in fact maintains that "perhaps it is correct to say that there was no such thing as Impressionism, only Impressionists," Impressionism, 269.

11. T.J. Clark, The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984): 267.

12. H., "Art and Toronto," Arcadia 1 (July 1892): 98.

13. In her book The Hague School: Collecting in Canada at the Turn of the Century (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1983): 15, Marta H. Hurdalek wrote regarding the popularity of the Hague School painters with Canadian collectors: "To the Canadian-Scottish collectors, the Hague School landscapes often reminded them of their roots... In addition these two cultures [the Scottish and Dutch] shared a religious puritanism and a strong work ethic, and the new collectors felt comfortable with images which avoided the sensuous, the allegorical and the Papist...Landscapes and especially images of human toil could easily be appreciated when newly acquired wealth and status removed the collector from sharing a similar destiny."

14. Hurdalek, The Hague School, 10. In a review of Montreal art collectors, Lynn C. Doyle wrote in "Art Notes," Saturday Night (April 18, 1896): "One cannot but be struck by certain similarities among these collectors; with few exceptions [William Van Horne] there seems to be little admiration for the modern schools, for the luminarists, the impressionists, the Monet-ists (if there is such a word). There is an almost universal leaning towards Dutch art."

15. The work of the Hague School painters can actually be subdivided into five categories: Dutch landscapes (with polders, canals or windmills) or cityscapes; landscapes with animals; beach scenes and seascapes; fishing or peasant life; and Dutch interiors. Ronald de Leeuw Ed. The Hague School: Dutch Masters of the Nineteenth Century (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1983): 115.

16. In this respect Tully's paintings, particularly her domestic *genre* images, which are discussed in the next chapter, follow suit. None of her *genre* paintings located to date blatantly appear to criticize or support living/working conditions for women and yet her focus on this theme suggests Tully had definite views on the subject.

17. E.B. Greenshields, Landscape Painting and Modern Dutch Artists (London: Arthur F. Bird, 1905): III. Greenshields was a major Canadian collector of the Hague School and his book was the first art book to be published by a Canadian author.

18. In her very thorough treatment of the Canadian enthusiasm for collecting Hague School paintings during the late nineteenth-century Hurdalek writes: "Much further research needs to be done to fully assess the impact of the Hague School on early Canadian painting." The Hague School, 23. If one goes solely by the accounts provided by J. Russell Harper and Dennis Reid in their surveys of Canadian Art, the Hague School would seem to have had no impact. From my research however, it was primarily the women artists from this period that responded to the Hague School and since they too are absent from Harper's and Reid's texts this facet of Canadian art history has been neglected.

19. Hurdalek, The Hague School, 10.

20. Greenshields, Landscape Painting, 33.

21. "Dutch Painters of Today," Magazine of Art 24 (1900): 280. The anonymous author goes on to write: "Were we to judge the Dutch only by the art of some of their leading painters, we should consider them the most serious and solemn, almost the most dejected, people in the civilized world."

22. I have in mind here Tully's faceless women, or women working or simply sitting and not interacting with each other or with the outside world; e.g., Washing Day n.d., At the Loom 1899; The Twilight of Life 1894; all discussed at greater length in the next chapter.

23. These comments appeared in the following: Saturday Night (6 January 1900), (3 September 1898), (22 May 1897), (9 May 1896), (4 April 1896) and (4 May 1895).

24. John Sillevis in de Leeuw Ed., The Hague School, 97.

25. Elizabeth W. Champney, "Women in Art," The Quarterly Illustrator 2 (April/June 1894): 113.

26. Hurdalek, The Hague School, 23.

27. Artists who visited Holland around this time included: Mary Dignam, M.Cary McConnell, Clara Hagarty, Syndey Tully, Eleanor Douglas, Laura Muntz Lyall, G. Chavignaudin, G.W. Morrice, Curtis Williamson, and J.W. Beatty.

28. Jean Grant, Saturday Night (12 August 1899).

29. Jean Grant, Saturday Night (31 March 1900).

30. Tully divided her time on this trip between the British Jersey Channel Islands and the Netherlands.

31. The Barbizon School was a group of landscape painters who frequented the tiny village of Barbizon located in the middle of Fontainebleau Forest beginning in the 1830's. Characteristics of their painting include: painting *en plein air*, close-up scenes of unspoiled nature, clotted or speckled brushwork and an affinity between human beings and nature.

32. Although this painting can by no means be classified as modernist, particularly if compared to landscapes by Cezanne from the same period, it is, however, forward rather than backward looking.

33. Toronto possessed about twenty committed collectors of the Hague School, Montreal about fifty. Hurdalek, The Hague School, 19.

34. Van, "Art and Artists," Saturday Night (13 July 1889). It is interesting to note "Van's" choice of language which is dominated by stereotypically gendered adjectives.

35. For a very thorough discussion of landscape painting in Canada see Dennis Reid, Our Own Country Canada (Ottawa: The National Gallery of Canada, 1979).

36. Altmeyer, "Three Ideas," 28.

37. Allan Pringle, "William Cornelius Van Horne: Art Director, Canadian Pacific Railway," Journal of Canadian Art History 7/8 (1984): 50.

38. W. Blackburn Harte, "Canadian Art and Artists," New England Magazine (Boston) 4 (April 1891): 256, 161.

39. The Hudson River School was a school of American landscape painting which developed shortly after 1800 with the landscapes of Washington Allston. Highly romantic in feeling, these paintings glorified and idealized Nature. Prominant in America from c. 1825 to 1870, the style of the HRS had a number of followers in Canada which included Lucius O'Brien and John Fraser.

40. Pringle, "Van Horne," 67, 74.

41. Ann Bermingham, Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740 - 1860 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986): 3. Bermingham's theory is that the relationship of a particular class to the means of production is embedded not only in what is represented but also in the social code or system of respresentation itself.

42. "Wanted - A figure Painter," Canadian Courier (9 March 1907).

43. Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of Nature," 22.

44. Ibid.

45. For example, between 1891 and 1911, Montreal and Toronto more than doubled in size; Vancouver and Winnipeg increased fivefold; while Calgary, Edmonton and Regina arose from nowhere. During the decade 1901-1911, Canada's urban population increased by 62% and the rural population by only 17%. Altmeyer, "Three Ideas," 23.

46. Ibid.

47. There are exceptions to this, for example, F.M. Bell-Smith's Lights of a City Street of 1884. See: Dorothy Farr Urban Images, Canadian Painting (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1990.)

48. "Wanted - A Figure Painter."

49. Ibid.

50. Jean Grant, "Studio and Gallery," Saturday Night (24 December 1898).

51. The passage continues: "Ladies who from their earliest years have given themselves wholly to its pursuit; whose life has been spent in the midst of art sentiment, and many of whom have personal knowledge of much that is great in the world of art abroad, are numerous in Toronto." Jean Grant "Studio and Gallery," Saturday Night (16 December 1899). By the 1890's the following women artists were practicing in Toronto: Florence Carlyle; Mary Dignam; Mary Bell-Eastlake; Harriet Ford; Clara Hagarty; Laura Muntz Lyall; Mary Heister Reid; Charlotte Mount Brock Schreiber; and Sydney Strickland Tully. There were of course many more women artists in Toronto.

52. With the advent of modernism the painting of figures quickly became secondary to the primary concerns of *avant-garde* artists. Canada's brief flowering of figurative art, when the rest of the western world was exploring the painted surface, was later viewed as an embarrassment by modernist historians. For example L.S. Harris writes in "The R.C.A. Reviewed," The Lamps 1 (December 1911):9 "In the last ten years there has been a struggle to rise above the conventional and sentimental art (so-called) of the Victorian era." While in 1957 R.H. Hubbard wrote about this period in "Growth in Canadian Art," The Culture of Contemporary Canada (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957):122. "Needless to say, there were also a number of other painters who merely satisfied the predilection of the time for fragile figure subjects and for ornate allegorical and historical machines." As might be expected, Hubbard does not discuss the works of any turn-of-the-century women artists in his review.

53. Van, "The Royal Canadian Academy's Exhibition," Saturday Night (14 March 1891).

54. G.Russell Harper, Painting in Canada: A History 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985): 217. Harper writes: "Genre, either whimsical, classical, or indigenous narrative subjects, became so fashionable that anyone ambitious for an international reputation was forced to exhibit works of this kind." This was a world-wide phenomenon, not simply Canadian; for example at the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exposition, 394 of 400 paintings exhibited were large-format genre pieces.

55. George Agnew Reid, husband of the well-known floral painter Mary Heister Reid, was born and reared on a farm at Wingham, Ontario. After apprenticing with a local architect, Reid moved to Toronto in 1878 where he attended evening classes at the Ontario School of Art, studying under Robert Harris. Reid first exhibited with the O.S.A. in 1881 but went on to continue his studies in Pennsylvania at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts under Thomas Eakins (1883-1885), and at the Academies Julian and Colarossi (1888-1889). During the 1890's Reid completed a number of large genre paintings in the academic tradition, but mural painting totally captured his interest around 1895 and his production of these works gradually decreased.

56. The Foreclosure of the Mortgage won two bronze medals for Reid, (one at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and one at the 1894 California Mid-winter International Exposition, San Francisco) and received a number of glowing reviews by the press. Christine Boyanoski, Sympathetic Realism: George A. Reid and the Academic Tradition (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1986): 33-35. Jeanne was singled out in a positive review of the opening of an O.S.A. exhibition by Jean Grant, "Studio and Gallery," Saturday Night (28 January 1899). It was purchased by the Government of Ontario that same year to form part of its collection. Fern Bayer "The "Ontario Collection" and the Ontario Society of Artists Policy and Purchases, 1873-1914," RACAR 1:8 (1981): 32-54.

57. Phebe D. Natt wrote in "Paris Art - Schools," Lippincott's Magazine 27 (1881): 275 "But whatever may be thought of realism carried to its utmost limits, certainly for study and discipline it is invaluable, and, accordingly, one can but admire and respect the intensity with which French masters impress upon their pupils the closest observation and the most literal, truthful rendering of the model before them."

58. Charles Rosen and Henri Zemer, Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth Century Art (New York: The Viking Press, 1984): 207.

59. Ibid., 209.

60. *Finis* encompassed meticulous detail, a smooth glossy surface, transitional gradations between colours and between tones, and the unbroken modeling of form. Ibid., 221,222.

61. *Il Faute etre de son temps*, or "being of one's time" was the rallying cry of the Realist movement. However, according to Linda Nochlin in her book Realism (New York: Penguin Books, 1983): 105-106, there were in fact three ways of being contemporary open to artists and writers: "In the first place, one may attempt to express the ideals, achievements and aspirations of one's own time in the

symbolic or allegorical rhetoric of traditional art or literature. In the second place, one might insist that contemporaneity implied an actual confrontation with and serious, unidealized embodiment of, the concrete experiences, customs and appearances characteristic of one's own epoch, whether this be with a spirit of moral urgency or of phenomenological indifference to the social and human values involved. Finally, one can conceive of being artistically of one's times as actually implying being in advance of them, an outlook which has conditioned the hermetic conception of contemporaneity prevailing within our avant-gardes at least since the beginning of this century."

62. That these *avant-garde* artists who affirmed the two-dimensional picture plane were also propagating a fiction is frequently overlooked. The self-referential, and often non-representational, aspect of their work is in fact representational in that it signifies its own non-representational character. What in fact occurred at this time was merely the substitution of one signifier of pictorial surface for another, both transparent, both falling "into a bottomless system of reduplication." Rosalind E. Krauss, The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1985): 161.

63. Jean Grant, "Studio and Gallery," Saturday Night (14 January 1899). The full quote reads: "It is a pleasing and hopeful feature of art life in Toronto that amid the increasing number of artists, especially young ladies, there is yet such distinct and marked individuality."

CHAPTER FOUR

WORTHY OF THEIR HIRE

She looketh well to the ways
of her household, and eateth
not the bread of idleness.

PROVERBS XXXI.27

We are commercial, a people of agriculture and manufacturing, comparatively commonplace...Is there, therefore, no art in these?...We want the artist who will take our humblest scenes of Canadian life, interpret them for us, and in so doing glorify them...[1]

Writing these words in 1900 Jean Grant, the art critic for Saturday Night magazine, sought to encourage Canadian artists to locate their subject matter within the environs of their own country, and to treat unsophisticated incidents from Canadian folk culture in a large and grandiose manner. This was the formula followed by many successful Salon *genre* painters as well as by such Canadian figure painters as Robert Harris and George Reid.[2] A number of Canadian women artists such as Sydney Tully, however, appear to have re-interpreted the traditional dictates of *genre* painting. Instead of scenes particular to Canada, they produced small-scale works that explored experiences applicable to broad cross-sections of folk cultures from Western society. Since the popularity of peasant and folk imagery can be traced back to the eighteenth century,[3] in some respects Tully's subject matter would have been comfortingly familiar to the Canadian public. For example, she produced a number of paintings that dealt with peasant society as a whole and involved such work-a-day tasks as harvesting, loading or milling grain, and repairing fishing nets.[4] Significantly, however, the largest proportion of Tully's *genre* paintings deal with those domestic experiences particular to peasant women and farm wives. Although her subject matter in itself was not unusual, Tully's preoccupation with female *genre* subjects seems worth exploring in terms of their meanings for her as a woman artist.

In these paintings Tully depicted women involved in a number of labour-intensive activities such as weaving, sewing or knitting, childcare and motherhood, preparing or gathering food, feeding livestock and washing laundry.[5] Typical examples of such work include: Harvest c. 1906 (fig.10); Mother and Child c. 1908 (fig. 11); Jeanne 1898 (fig. 9); At the Loom: French Canadian Interior 1899 (fig. 12); Washing Day n.d. (fig. 13); Washing c. 1899 (fig. 14); Washing c. 1906 (fig. 15); and Windy Weather, Holland 1906 (fig. 16). An examination of these paintings reveals that Tully did not overtly "glorify" the labour of these women. Interestingly, unlike many of her women peers who allowed their female imagery power and control within the pictorial space by foregrounding their subject's activities,[6] Tully's figures tend to dissolve into their surroundings. Washing (c. 1906) is a typical example. Because many of Tully's women seem to lack individuality,

and in some cases even recognizable features, they appear to be nothing more than the sum of their labour. Indeed, the class of women who remained bound to agriculture in an industrial age, and who stood outside the reach of technological advances in home labour-saving devices, did not for the most part share in the concerns and accomplishments of middle-class feminists. We might ask what Tully, a middle-class woman artist, intended by depicting unpaid and labour-intensive, engendered work in a rapidly industrializing society, when services as well as goods were acquiring monetary value.

During the nineteenth century, images of peasants appeared in a wide range of visual and literary culture, from Salon paintings to the illustrated press, from novels to travel journals.[7] During this time, the word "peasant" was loosely employed to describe any rural labourer. Such subjects were part of a picturesque aesthetic that was pursued by academic and *avant-garde* artists alike. Part of the appeal of peasant subjects was the mythically timeless status of the rural world--at least in the eyes of bourgeois artists, critics and dealers. Peasant paintings often functioned as emblems of stability and unity for consumers who were unsettled by the social and technological changes going on around them.[8] Because peasants produced and gathered what they ate and made what they wore, these people were viewed as "primitive."

In France, peasant paintings had been a regular feature of the Salon since achieving immense popularity around 1850. Such large-scale paintings were usually highly idealized "academic machines" painted from studio mock-ups with professional models outfitted in peasant garb. The criticism of these idealistic abstractions is implicit in the works of later realist painters such as Jean Francois Millet (1814-1875)[9] whose renditions of the many hardships of rural life, although not unproblematic, seemed on the surface straightforward and sincere to many viewers. Peasant genre painting quickly spread to Europe and America, becoming a popular theme during the second half of the nineteenth century.[10] Even artists belonging to Impressionist or Hague School circles, who were primarily interested in technical problems such as the atmospheric effects of light or the visual implications of broken brushwork and pure colour, used the familiar vehicle of the peasant motif to explore formal concerns.

The visual and psychological appeal of secluded and "primitive" cultures needs to be investigated. Evidently, a public nostalgia for these human microcosms, unaffected by

technological change, ensured a receptive and steady market for paintings of them. Sydney Tully was probably first attracted to the pleasures of living and working in rural areas during the summer months while training in London and Paris. Country living was considered a restorative to the unhealthy demands of urban centres. Furthermore, the reduced living costs and the willingness of local folk to model for small sums made summer sketching and painting retreats an important part of an artists's life. Tully spent a number of months, and eventually years, seeking out rustic areas in Scotland, Holland and the British Channel Islands. While in Toronto or London, the demand for her services as a portrait painter left her little time for pursuing other subjects. Her two-year sojourn in Holland and Jersey (1906-1908) was an extremely prolific period for her, and it was during this time that Tully's interest in domestic *genre* reached a new peak.[11]

Domestic *genre* painting, although reinforcing the bourgeois value of family life, was frequently denigrated as a theme suitable only for women artists who belonged to this sphere anyway. Nonetheless the appeal of such paintings for members of the purchasing and viewing public could not be denied, and the market for such works was a steady one. Douglas Brymner, writing to his son William in 1886, recommended that in order to be assured of sales he paint "some little domestic *genre* pieces.... anything that people can fix a story on would be good policy... There must be some human interest to attract those who know little about technique."[12] Thus although the status of *genre* painting within the fine arts was frequently challenged, the financial rewards of locating provincial areas and painting traditional ways of life was quite strong.[13] Although Brittany was a popular location where, by the turn of the century, many *avant-garde* works had been produced, it attracted, as mentioned in the last chapter, primarily male artists. It is perhaps no surprise then that Tully was drawn to the nearest "respectable" counterpart: Jersey, the largest of the British Channel islands that lie off the coast of France. Like Brittany, Jersey was relatively isolated from the modernizing effects of the industrialized world. It was also considered to be "emphatically an artist's haunt and painter's paradise"[14] possessing numerous twisting country lanes and gabled farm houses. The interior of Jersey was considered pastoral, containing prehistoric megalithic monuments, medieval churches and castle ruins. Furthermore, the coastline was thought to be wild and sublime. Yet it was the people, and particularly the women, upon whom Tully concentrated her efforts.

Tully's interest in rural women's domestic work probably began in earnest in Canada. Commencing in 1899, she spent two summers in provincial Quebec -- Canada's own primitive arcadia:

> The ideal sketching ground is Quebec. History and romance fairly ooze from its wooden structures, its numerous gates. Artistically it presents innumerable motifs worthy a painter's brush...[such as] primitive interiors, quaint streets, old gates and towers.[15]

Although a number of female and male artists were turning to the French province, Tully's Quebec works were singled out as being particularly fine for their "truthful tales of nature's moods and of the quaint simplicity of many of the domestic and social conditions of that region."[16] By the last two decades of the nineteenth century some critics felt that a great deal of headway had been made by Canadian figure painters,[17] in depicting "the carefulness, sanity and virility of our national life."[18] The day of the crude amateurish, or pot-boiling landscape was considered over now that Canadian art was more thoroughly cosmopolitan.[19] "Cosmopolitan," of course meant "French" which in turn meant the "triumph of realism."[20]

It should be emphasized that realism must not be equated with the type of literary painting much favoured during the Victorian period. In fact, the literary side of painting was to be avoided since it was considered too conventional and sentimental.[21] By the turn of the century it was the *genre* painters in Canada as a whole who were felt to have made the most significant contribution to Canadian art. In particular, the advances made by women artists were felt to be worth noting:

> ...among them [lady artists] are numbered some of the most sympathetic painters in Canada...they will soon have outlived the purely dulcet period of creative art, and we can look to the future for some great achievements in this field.[22]

Although Canadian women artists were frequently considered to have failed with regard to composition, in subject matter they were often thought to be at the forefront.[23] In a period when it was felt that "the greatest artists have always been those who have dealt with the most human themes in a large and simple manner"[24] it was perhaps no small compliment for one critic to write:

> The drama of human passion and sacrifice which seems to form the basis of all creative art is going on in our midst awaiting the artist [the supreme simplifier] to portray it... Perhaps the supreme simplifier whom Canada is to produce will be a woman.[25]

Thus, although domestic *genre* may have been frowned upon in some international quarters, many Canadian art circles were more receptive. This was at least partly because of the immense popularity of Dutch Hague School artists, whose many images of home-life lent importance to the *genre*. The most satisfactory works were those that were believed to deal with life in simple, uncompromising ways. It was probably for works of this type that Tully was praised by critics for always providing a "faithful account of the facts of her subjects."[26]

Tully's purchasers seem to have been typical of many nineteenth century collectors in that they wanted truthful, "factual" paintings that accurately reflected the social conditions of primitive or rural societies. Works of art, however, inevitably communicate certain norms or ideas and the artist cannot help but impose her own culture upon her representation of another.[27] In most cases pictures of peasants were used as emblems of such bourgeois cultural values[28] as: work, family, religion or patriotism. Such pictures inferred these values were human and not ideological constructs (even though peasants, like their urban counterparts, whether bourgeois or proletariat, had no unified system of values).[29] Thus the most popular paintings were those that stressed one or more of these four values. Although Tully's imagery clearly falls within the work and family categories, it is uncertain whether she supported or challenged these values either directly or indirectly.

Tully's decision to concentrate on working figures meant that she deliberately generated technical problems for herself. Truly successful portrayals of the working human form, such as those captured in her paintings of women doing laundry, could only be the result of cumulative observation. Her pictures rarely seem contrived and only occasionally posed. Like the majority of peasant paintings from this period, Tully's genre works are either portraiture such as Jeanne, or *genre* scenes of unidentified peasant types such as Washing Day.[30] In the tradition of *genre* painting, peasants were usually depicted in contrived scenarios that revealed facets of their material or spiritual lives. The technical objective of the artist was to achieve a harmony between the figures and their humble

surroundings. Tully, in the examples located to date and illustrated here, eschewed such constructed settings, relying instead on structural elements to provide the meaning of her pictures. Paintings such as Washing Day and At the Loom, which on the surface appear to be apolitical and without comment, clearly contain compositional devices that suggest these works are anti-idealist. Like Millet's peasants, Tully's women are always workers[31] whose toil has left its imprint on their bodies. Such appears to be the case, for example, in Windy Weather, Holland where the unidentifiable task occupying a hunched woman with gnarled hands is lost to the looseness of Tully's brushwork. The labour of these women has virtually consumed their bodies and it is perhaps for this reason that so many of them are featureless.[32]

At the Loom, painted as a result of Tully's travels in rural Quebec, was purchased by the Ontario Government when first hung in the Ontario Society of Artists exhibition of 1900. The painting depicts two women weaving; in the background a young woman in a blue-grey skirt and white apron stands operating a large hand loom while a capped, older woman bends over a spinning wheel in the foreground. It was believed by many Canadians at the turn of the century that only in French-Canadian villages could an "individual Canadian womanhood" be found.[33] The French-Canadian woman was thought to be "the most careful and exacting of housekeepers...At any time, through the half-open door of a thatched cottage, the passer-by may catch a glimpse of a well-arranged interior..."[34] *Habitant* women were "industrious, thrifty, cleanly, and simple in ideas and manners," they were also considered to be extremely moral and religious, highly prolific and essentially unmodern in every way.[35] As a society, the *habitants* were seen as a primitive culture soon to be obsolete:

> The habitants form the nearest approach to a peasantry, as found in European lands, that this country can show; and peasantry is doomed to extinction, be it sooner or later.[36]

In the manner of earlier Canadian artists, such as Paul Kane (1810-1871) who sketched Native life in western Canada, Tully may have sought to record an incident from Canadian women's culture for posterity. Certainly the heritage implications of the painting would have been a factor in the provincial government's decision to purchase the work. Use of the hand loom was perceived to be a prominant part of a *habitant* woman's life. In 1907, John Larus, writing about the customs of rural Quebec, declared:

> Some of these enduring customs are peculiarly connected with womanhood. The use of the loom, for example, is still known in some of the far-away villages of the French-Canadians, and in those villages little is worn that is not the product of home toil. It may be that this is the only quarter of the western hemisphere where the hand loom is not a thing of the past; but here it exists and with it as its natural accompaniment some of the more old-fashioned traits of womanhood.[37]

The association of women with spinning and weaving as being "natural" stems well back into history primarily because textile and clothing manufacture was a domestic (therefore female) responsibility. In literature and folklore, weaving has long been considered a typically feminine handicraft.[38] What Tully has portrayed in At the Loom, however, is far from romanticized. In a cottage so poorly illuminated that the walls are lost to an inky blackness, two women work by the light of a single window. The woman operating the hand loom is young and pretty, her facial features quite clearly defined. Bent demurely over her work she seems to represent the present, full of possibilities and limitless potential. The painting, however, dictates that her future is assured in one direction only. Her gaze is totally absorbed by the task at hand; the spectator feels that hers is, and always will be, the private world of the home. This was in fact usually the case:

> The young girl of Quebec...is educated at a convent, where her mental and moral character is well looked after. She marries early, and seems almost instinctively to acquire those housewifely and matronly accomplishments which make her home the admiration and envy of outsiders.[39]

Tully reinforces this by depicting two generations of women in her painting. The old woman in the foreground, although closer to the viewer, has virtually no facial features and appears almost to be wearing a mask. Hunched stiffly over the small spinning wheel, we suspect that she in fact represents the young woman's future: old, without individuality, circumscribed only by her labour. Tully thus reveals to the viewer a rather unattractive sequence of events, and in so doing suggests that she herself was in the habit of looking critically when dealing with this particular subject matter.

Of the many incidents of *habitant* life that Tully would have been exposed to during two summers of painting in Quebec, she concentrated not on their merrymaking as did *habitant* painters of the past such as Cornelius Kreighoff (1815-1872), but on the *habitant*

woman and the physical and mental demands of her existence. Weaving and spinning were not only physically demanding but monotonous as well; as one Quebec visitor noted:

> But think, will you, of the hours at the spinning wheel, the sitting little wheel and the walking big wheel, the dyeing, the wearying banging and shuttling of the looms...[40]

I think that although Tully produced At the Loom safely within the accepted parameters of domestic *genre* painting of the time, and that on the surface the image appears to be made without comment, she succeeds in shedding some doubt on the complacency and picturesqueness of the scene by capturing the monotony of this labour, which precludes the two women from even interacting with each other let alone the outside, public world.[41] Perhaps the "reality" of At the Loom lies with the old woman, denied personality and distinctness in art, because her contributions were unrecognized in life. By subtly focusing on the lives of women who where neither part, nor beneficiaries of, the gains being made by the Women's Movement at this time, Tully's imagery succeeds in indirectly drawing attention to the whole issue of "separate spheres"[42] as an ideological construct that was only further pigeon-holing women even as they entered the public sector.[43]

The question of female sexuality was an important issue during the last half of the nineteenth century and the visual arts performed a fundamental role in categorizing images of women into forms of the deviant and the normal.[44] During these decades, human sexuality emerged as a major social issue that infiltrated politics, medicine, psychiatry and art. All produced discourses on sexuality in which its acceptable and unacceptable forms were identified.[45] For example, the most highly approved images of women restricted themselves to conventional, middle-class ladies who were "paragons of submissiveness."[46] These, usually beautifully-gowned women read, do needlework, or play musical instruments in the privacy and seclusion of their own homes, and thus reflect the traditional, feminine ideals and conservative social values of the artists and their patrons.[47] In light of the political and social gains being made by women during this time, idealized imagery of women as silent, solitary dreamers can often be seen as containing subtle anti-feminist propaganda, since they perpetuate the ideals of passivity, spirituality and domesticity, and restrict women's sphere to the home.[48] On the other hand, images of the New Woman who, "stripped of her protective chrysalis...challenged the prevailing

'natural' order of femininity"[49] were rare in painting. In certain sectors of Canadian society, the approach adopted by women lay somewhere between these two extremes.[50]

For some Canadians, the evolution of the modern woman was one of the most interesting developments in the 1890's; she was considered to be "refined, educated and aesthetic."[51] For others, the advanced woman was the "great menace of the age" who sought "to attack the impregnable wall of nature itself," and was therefore not only ridiculous but dangerous as well.[52] In reality, although many turn-of-the-century Canadian women were renouncing frivolity, passivity, subordination and the privatized familial roles prescribed for them, they did not reject their roles as wives and mothers. Canadian feminists were rarely militant, relying instead on education and persuasion to achieve their goals.[53] Interestingly this middle-of-the-road response to reform also characterizes the work of Sydney Tully who tended to avoid extremes in the depiction of female types. Instead, Tully's concentration on the demands of domestic life addressed a facet of women's experience that was only occasionally seen as relevant to the Women's Movement.[54]

Few Canadian women of the time denied the validity of gender division.[55] The ideological cornerstone of a "woman's sphere" was the family home that "sure foundation of the whole social structure," according to most Canadians, both English and French, rich and poor.[56] The family unit was a sign of harmony and stability since it was commonly believed that any breakdown in domestic order (such as women working outside the home) would lead to total social disintegration. Significantly Tully works against the prevailing norm by not depicting the family unit. Instead she isolates the housewife and mother, and in so doing detaches her from the myth. Or, as seen in her painting Washing (c. 1899), she depicts a domestic unit comprised of two women and a child suggesting perhaps that some form of social bonding is occurring between these two women simply because of their shared experiences. By repeatedly depicting only one half of the household Tully emphasizes the contribution made by these women, offering it to the viewer as something significant in its own right and worthy of independent consideration.

Ambivalent attitudes towards women's work was characteristic of much of nineteenth century Canadian thought. Once a woman married, her sphere was severely narrowed[57] and her unpaid labour taken for granted. This was especially the case for rural

and middle-class women who were frequently the subject-matter and viewers of Sydney Tully's domestic *genre* paintings. Although the employed woman could strike, the housewife was not part of any union and the withdrawal of her labour power was considered a crime by the law.[58] The threat of losing her children further prevented her from "striking."[59] For the lower-class, pioneer or peasant woman, who could not afford to hire domestic help, the work load was not only staggering, but also unpaid and unrecognized. It is perhaps for this reason that some of Tully's images of rural women, with their faces obscured, remain isolated even when working together. The best example of this is Washing Day.

In Washing Day, three Dutch peasant women are gathered in a washhouse scrubbing laundry. All three are bent at the waist, angled over tubs of clothes, or simply bowed from age and work. None have turned this into an opportunity to gossip, but rather each remains psychologically and physically isolated, seemingly unaware of each other's presence. Each woman is in a different position: one remains totally anonymous with her back to the viewer, while the woman beside her who stands in profile has only basic facial features. Tully's refusal to individualize any of these women denies the spectator access to them. Instead we focus on their activities and the drudgery of their toil. When portraying an individual, artists frequently depict their subject's primary sphere of activity through the direction of their subject's gaze: usually men gaze out to the public sphere while women gaze privately inwards. It seems almost intentionally ironic that the only woman Tully depicted facing the spectator directly (the central and most distant figure) "stares" at the viewer from a sightless and totally featureless face. What, if any, message could Tully have intended to communicate by this muteness?

There is a tendency to think that by the beginning of the twentieth century technological advances in the development of labour-saving devices for the home had revolutionized the nature of housework. Recent research has revealed, however, that although all of the major domestic appliances were invented before 1900, their diffusion occurred at a much slower rate.[60] Even in the cities, where the wealthy upper-classes would have some access to these machines, the household remained an arena of strenuous and time-consuming work, still organized along precapitalist lines.[61] For rural women without the benefits of electricity and labour-saving devices, the workload was staggering. The laundry process, in particular, from start to finish, was extraordinary.[62] The most

basic laundry duties were an enormous amount of hard, hot, heavy work. In her *genre* paintings of female subjects it would appear Tully attempted to challenge viewers to contemplate the unending workday of women who can assert neither themselves nor the value of their labour which remains largely hidden.[63] Nonetheless, women who looked at Tully's paintings dealing with laundry probably could not help but respond to them differently than men--men would see women washing; women would see themselves involved in physically taxing housework.

As a theme, Tully's images of women washing laundry operated safely within nineteenth century bourgeois cultural ideology and its visual discourse by celebrating the work ethic in a stylistically and aesthetically pleasing way. Images of laundresses were common at this time, and most often, as in the works of Edgar Degas (1834-1917)[64] these women were depicted as robust and hardworking -- sometimes drudges, sometimes pretty and flirtatious.[65] The commercial laundress was commonly understood by the middle-class to be sexually available, and bourgeois artists frequently depicted them as sex objects: "hardy, absorbed women, contentedly ironing in cozy, sundrenched corners" who directly or indirectly flirt with the spectator. In Tully's paintings the women are always fully dressed, the sunlight always outside, beckoning to them through door or window. For her, sexual availability would not seem to have been an issue. Another fundamental difference between the laundress images of Tully and Degas is that the women in Degas' paintings are wage workers who have a direct relation to capital. Their purpose in working is to get paid and, like factory employees, their work is timed by the clock. In contrast, the women in Tully's paintings are housewives who belong to an unpaid system of labour.

Sydney Tully's *genre* paintings lie squarely within middle-class, patriarchal codes of seeing. At first glance, her imagery and style do not disrupt the conventions of domestic *genre*. Although during the nineteenth century women were accustomed to producing and consuming images from the masculine viewpoint, women artists frequently negotiated this perspective by expanding and thus transforming the existing visual discourse. Tully, like her female patrons, could not have helped "seeing" these women differently than did men because, as a woman, her social experiences were different. Although she operated within the cultural norms of her own time, the women she painted do not seem to be objectified or depicted for the gratification of the male spectator.

Tully's pictures of domestic labour are not quaint, intimate or sociable and in this respect they challenge idealized, stereotypic images of women. Dealing with traditional, and therefore familiar, female-types Tully draws attention to their anonymity. Where faces should be clearly discernable they are deliberately absent or so roughed-in that the features are barely present.[66] Tully's women are emblems of domestic labour; as in life, the viewer sees the labourer first, the individual last or not at all. In this respect, Tully's representation of women differs from her contemporary, Mary Cassatt (1844-1926)[67] who specialized in painting middle-class women in domestic *milieus*, but who deliberately emphasized their public and social personas. Cassatt depicted women as independent public people who pursued interests not directed towards the needs of others; women who frequently enjoyed the company of women. Most of her female figures dominate her canvas and are neither spectacles for male pleasure nor spectators of male activity.[68] Tully was like Cassatt in one respect, however, in that she omitted appealing details of physique in order to deny the "women as spectacle" metaphor. Tully's low-keyed paintings with their rough finish and her unidealized housewives thwart voyeuristic viewing expectations.

Tully's apparent rejection of "women as object" was unorthodox for the time and reveals, to a certain extent, the understanding she had of some aspects of women's lives. Her imagery however, managed to address the experiences of these women without compromising her position in the art market, for her paintings depict women safely within their "proper sphere." And yet, the absence of certain things -- quaintness, sentimentality, availability -- serves to remind the viewer that this sphere was often an unfair and oppressive economic construct.

CHAPTER FOUR

Notes

1. Jean Grant, Saturday Night (3 March 1900).

2. For example see Robert Harris' A Meeting of the School Trustees 1886 (99.7 x 123.1 cm) in J. Russell Harper's Painting in Canada; and George Reid's Mortgaging the Homestead 1890 (128.3 x 212.1 cm) in Dennis Reid's A Concise History of Canadian Painting.

3. For a thorough exploration of the peasant motif in painting see: Richard Brettell and Caroline Brettell, Painters and Peasants in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1983).

4. From exhibition catalogues I have tentatively identified fifteen such works from descriptive titles such as: Haymakers, Lower Canada, Harvesting, and Returning from the Fields.

5. Similarly determined as above, Tully painted at least forty-three works involving domestic motifs including fifteen entitled Mother and Child, and fifteen involving washing laundry.

6. An example of this would be Mary Cassatt's Lydia at a Tapestry Frame (c. 1881). For a discussion of this topic see Susan Fillin Yeh's article "Mary Cassatt's Images of Women," Art Journal, 35 (summer 1976): 359-363.

7. Brettell, Peasants, 7.

8. Ibid., 39.

9. Himself the son of peasants Millet's mature works, which emphasize peasants and their labours, contain a high degree of social criticism; e.g. The Sower, 1850. Many of Daumier's black and white illustrations and drawings contain severe political and social satire while his depiction of the effects of poverty were totally unidealized, e.g. Third Class Carriage, 1862. Courbet also dealt with similar themes, e.g. The Stonebreakers, 1859.

10. Brettell, Peasants, 39.

11. The 429 paintings (162 of which were auctioned) that formed Tully's Memorial Exhibition in December 1911 (Art Metropole Galleries) attest to the enthusiasm with which she painted during her 1906-1908 sabbatical for many of the titles contain reference to Holland or Jersey.

12. D. Brymner quoted in J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada: A History, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977): 211.

13. There were exceptions, however, and frequently these locales were sought for aesthetic or ideological reasons as well. For example, Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) who lived in Brittany, Martinique and Tahiti, painted primitive and unspoiled peoples in a style that rejected the naturalistic tradition and emphasized the expression of ideas moods and emotions. In 1888 Gauguin and Emile Bernard (1868-1941) had devised Synthetism at Pont-Aven in Brittany making an extreme break with the naturalist tradition. Through the use of large, flat, outlined areas of colour, Gauguin reinforced the spiritual and social differences of unsophisticated peoples while exploring his own unconventional aesthetic principles. See Gaugin's The Vision After the Sermon 1888 or Paul Serusier's The Talisman 1888 in Edward Lucie-Smith's Symbolist Art (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972) for an example of this.

14. Edward Bradbury, "Jersey." Magazine of Art 4, (1881): 515.

15. Jean Grant, Saturday Night (22 July 1899 and 23 June 1900).

16. Ibid: (6 January 1900). Although present-day historians and critics are aware of the fallacy of the reflection theory of art, most individuals in the nineteenth century felt, like Grant, that realistic art was truthful and that art was a mirror of society.

17. Figuré painters from this period would include: Charlotte Schriber; Harriet Ford; Sydney Tully; Florence Carlyle; Laura Muntz; Clara Hagarty; Mary Dignam; Robert Harris; F.M. Bell-Smith; Wyatt Eaton; Paul Peel; George Reid and William Brymner.

18. Toronto Globe (27 November 1909) from the R.C.A. Scrapbook, National Archives of Canada.

19. Ottawa Evening Journal (2 April 1894), R.C.A. Scrapbook.

20. W.A. Sherwood, "The Influence of the French School Upon Recent Art," Canadian Magazine 1 (October 1893): 639.

21. Writing in Canadian Magazine 3 (May 1894):49, Harriet Ford stated: "It is the fashion now, I know, to decry the 'literary' side of painting."

22. Hector W. Charlesworth, "The Canadian Girl," Canadian Magazine 1 (May 1893): 192.

23. Stephen Blackburn, "An Estimate of Canadian Women," Canadian Magazine 5 (October 1895): 574. Blackburn writes: "In artist's work women are often to the front, though they fail in regard to artistic composition."

24. Ottawa Citizen (6 April 1894), R.C.A. Scrapbook.

25. Charlesworth, "Canadian Girl," 186.

26. Jean Grant, Saturday Night (14 May 1898).

27. Brettell, Peasants, 9. See also John Berger Ways of Seeing (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972) for a more thorough discussion of this theory.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 76.

30. Ibid., 39.

31. From exhibition catalogues Tully evidently did a few paintings of "gossiping," which I have been unable to locate. Whether these were men or women, working or at rest, can only be speculated upon.

32. The following works depict faceless women: Windy Weather, Holland and Washing Day; while in Washing c. 1899, Washing c, 1906, At the Loom and Motherhood the facial features are only loosely transcribed.

33. John Rouse Larus, "Women of America," Women In all Ages and All Countries Vol. 10 (Philidelphia: The Rittenhouse Press, 1907): 251-270.

34. Henry J. Morgan and Lawrence J. Burbee, Canadian Life in Town and Country (London: Georges Newnes, Limited, 1905) see Chapter 8 "The Canadian Woman," 130-151.

35. Larus, "Women," 269.

36. Ibid., 270.

37. Ibid., 268.

38. For example, many of the women in Homer's poems are represented as weaving (Penelope, Helen): many ancient female deities were weavers (Isis, Athena); as well as women in more recent works (the Lady of Shallot).

39. Morgan, Canadian Life, 132.

40. Ralph Connor quoted in N.E.S. Griffiths, Penelope's Web: Some Perceptions of Women in European and Canadian Society (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976): 171.

41. The fact that each woman is depicted as isolated and withdrawn from the other adds to my belief that they may be understood as being located in different temporal spheres, i.e. the present and the future.

42. The cult of domesticity and the concept of "separate spheres" developed as a result of the separation of the home and workplace during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As the middle-class moved to the suburbs, leaving the cities to the working class and the casual poor, it became both economically and socially expedient to separate the two. Lynda Nead in her book Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1988): 32, observed that: "The separation of work and home had profound effects on the construction of gender identities; increasingly, women were defined as domestic beings, 'naturally' suited to duties in the home and with children; whilst men were associated with the public sphere, the world of business and politics."

43. For a discussion of the situation in Canada see T.R. Morrison " "Their Proper Sphere" Feminism, The Family, and Child-Centered Social Reform in Ontario, 1875-1900," Ontario History 68/69 Part One (March 1976): 45-64, Part Two (June 1976); 65-74; Daniel Scott Smith, "Family Limitation, Sexual Control, and Domestic Feminism in Victorian America," Feminist Studies 1 (1973): 40-57, and Wayne Roberts," "Rocking the Cradle for the World": The New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto 1877- 914, in Linda Kealey, ed. A Not Unreasonable Claim. Dorothea Dale in "The Millionth Woman," Canadian Magazine 8 (April 1897): 537-539, sums up much of the situation when she writes: "Nay, rather, it is in the interest of family affection and for the preservation of domestic happiness, whose holy of holies is believed to bounded by a golden circlet, that women should be made capable of self-support... Feminine devotion will be strengthened, not weakened, when women forsake material advantage, proud independence and cherished ambition to be what God intended - helps meet for men."

44. Nead, Myths, 2.

45. Ibid., 3.

46. Susan P. Casteras, The Substance or the Shadow: Images of Victorian Womanhood (New Haven: Yale Centre for British Art, 1982): 47. Women appeared also in a number of other guises and/or roles such a regal, charitable, fashionable, married, engaged, widowed, elderly, wayward or fallen, nude or religious.

47. Bernice Leader, "Antifeminism in the Paintings of the Boston School," Artmagazine, 56 (January 1982): 112.

48. Ibid., 118.

49. Casteras, Substance 47.

50. Writing in 1893, Hector Charlesworth noted in "Canadian Girl," 187: "We find in our women practical independence, strongly marked, combined with a demure regard for propriety and form, and partaking in no degree of the crude and vulgar revolt from restraint which begets the female stump orator."

51. Blackburn, "Estimate of Canadian Women," 574.

52. Reginald Gourlay, "A Decade of Fads," Canadian Magazine, 6 (November 1895): 67. Gourlay went on to describe the New Woman as "a scum and froth bubble on the great wave of the century's progress;" "a poisonous fungas on the beauteous and fruitful vine of woman's nature;"and "a parody and hideous travesty" who was "the pushing blatant vulgar incubus of her sex."

53. For a concise history of the Canadian Women's Movement see Lynn McDonald's article "The Evolution of the Women's Movement in Canada," Branching Out, 6:1 (1979): 39-43.

54. Dorothea Dale noted in 1897 in her article "The Millionth Woman," 539: "Is the temper more apt to be soured by a regular routine of congenial work than by a domesticity which, not unfrequently, tends to alternate states of boredom and anxiety?...The bodily exertion of a clerk, type-writer, teacher, lawyer, or doctor, is surely much less than that of the busy woman who does all the washing, ironing, cooking, sweeping, dusting and mending for half-a-dozen persons."

55. "Man's work, indeed, has, as a rule, been rather with the ruder material forces, or the public affairs of life; women's as a rule with the inner sanctities of the home [however] woman's work is no more to be divorced from man's work, than woman's life from man's life; than the sap which courses through the budding trees from the tissue that holds and is fed by it, unless to the injury or destruction of Both." Fidelis [Agnes Machar] "Woman's Work," Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review 1 (September 1878): 296.

56. Morgan, Canadian Life, 133.

57. Only one in forty married women in 1890 were in the labour force. Smith, "Family Limitation," 121-124.

58. Under English Common Law (which prevailed in all provinces except Quebec), upon marriage a woman and all her possessions became the property of her husband; legally a married woman ceased to be a person. Jeanne L'Esperance, The Widening Sphere: Women in Canada, 1870-1940. (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1982): 23. In rural Canada, according to both law and custom, a farm wife had little or no legal claim on family property that had been acquired partly as a result of her labours, even though a "good wife" was thought to be indispensable to a farmer. Nor did the Government of Canada recognize the work rural women did: In censuses, farm wives--like other women who worked in their homes--had "no

occupation." Alison Prentice, ed., Canadian Women: A History. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada, Inc., 1988): 118.

59. Wally Secombe, "The Housewife and Her Labour Under Capitalism," New Left Review, 83 (January/February 1974): 3-24.

60. Susan M. Strasser, "An Enlarged Human Existence? Technology and Household Work in Nineteenth-Century America," in Women and Household Labour, S.F. Berk, Ed., (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1980): 29-51.

61. Ibid., 30.

62. It was felt by many nineteenth century authors of books on domestic economy for women that laundry could not or should not be a one-person job. H. Campbell wrote in 1881 in her book The Easiest Way in Housekeeping and Cooking, quoted in Strasser, "Enlarged Existence?", 41 that one should begin with overnight soaking, separating laundry into individual tubs. The next morning this water was drained off and warm soapy water added; the laundry was then rubbed and rinsed. The clothes were then boiled and given a cold water rinse. From there they went into a tub with blueing powder. After that they had to be completely wrung out and hung to dry. Collars and cuffs were dipped into homemade starch; then everything was dampened for ironing.

63. With the advent of capitalism, the general labour process was split into two distinct units: the domestic and the industrial. The character of the work performed in each was fundamentally different, and this split in the labour process led to gender division within the labour force--women into the domestic unit, men into industry. The domestic unit reproduced and took care of labour power for the labour market. the industrial unit produced goods and services for the commodity market. Housework, due to the fact that it was unpaid, was not considered labour in any economic sense and was therefore disregarded. The reason for this is that under capitalism, labour power, which is exchanged for wages, becomes a commodity and therefore valuable. Domestic labour, however, is privatized and not social and therefore has no direct relation with capital and thus no equivalent expressed in paid wage. Secombe, "Housewife and her Labour."

64. Degas, although receiving an academic training, had by the late 1860's developed a number of unusual compositional techniques such as cropping, unusual angles of view and ambiguous spatial elements. He was a member of the circle of artists gathered around Eduard Manet (1832-1883) and took part in seven of the eight Impressionist exhibitions. Degas' contemporary subject matter frequently involved images of women, particularly ballet dancers, models dressing and bathing, cabaret artists and laundresses.

65. Eunice Lipton, Looking Into Degas: Uneasy Images of Women and Modern Life (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986): 118. See Chapter Three, "Images

of Laundresses: Social and Sexual Ambivalence" for a number of reproductions of Degas's paintings of laundresses.

66. This may also be seen as evidence of Tully's emerging moderism.

67. Cassatt, although born in the United States, spent most her life in France. She first met Degas in 1877 and subsequently exhibited with the Impressionists. She was interested in the work of Courbet and Manet, and painted a number of domestic scenes in a loose style frequently combined with oblique or unusual angles of view.

68. Yeh, "Mary Cassatt," 359-363. Some of Cassatt's paintings of women can be curiously ambivalent, however, for example Lydia in the Loge.

CHAPTER FIVE

OF PORTRAITS AND PASTELS

You must look into people
as well as at them

LORD CHESTERFIELD

> *The first great problem confronting the [portrait] painter is the influence and effect of environment upon his subject...Character has depth; expressions of the countenance are more or less evanescent in response to social, political, business, or other shifting relations of life, yet their temporary play has a permanent value.*[1]

Writing these words in his autobiography, Canadian artist J.W.L. Foster (1850-1938) reiterated one of the fundamental aspects of nineteenth century portraiture: the capturing of both the physical and psychological likeness of an individual. The ability to delve beyond appearances and depict a subject's total persona was the yardstick against which an artist's performance was judged in the press.

Within two years of her return to Canada Sydney Tully had acquired a reputation for being a talented portrait painter.[2] In reviews she was ranked among the leading Canadian portraitists of the day.[3] Like many other Canadian artists from this period, Tully probably relied on her abilities as a teacher, and her accomplishments as a portrait painter, to provide much needed financial support and stability. For, even as late as 1908, the press was noting that most Canadians were not widely interested in the arts despite the fact that the purchasing public was increasing in number. Copies or originals by European artists were still more often preferred by patrons of the fine arts. When it came to the production of commemorative likenesses, however, local painters were much in demand.[4]

Although many artists resorted to, or even specialized in, portrait painting, only a few were regularly singled out for repeated praise. Among the women artists Tully was the only one. Her "clever" or "striking" studies of individuals were considered "strong" and "well-modelled." Most importantly Tully's ability to achieve "very handsome bit[s] of colouring" and excellent flesh tints made her increasingly popular.[5] Her subject's poses were felt to be natural ones which created graceful flows of lines. Tully painted a number of Toronto's leading male citizens, usually in oils; however most of her portrait commissions were from women, and these she executed in pastel.[6] Tully's pastel portraits, along with a number of other works in this medium, place her firmly in the late nineteenth century movement that sought to resurrect pastel painting.[7] Portraiture, like pastel, also has its own history which although often influenced by *avant-garde* trends,

frequently remains distinguishable from them.[8] A number of Tully's portraits reveal that she was aware of, and sympathetic to, the many developments that occurred in this field during her lifetime.

The heyday of portraiture in Canada was undoubtedly the nineteenth century when it competed successfully with photography until capitulating around the time of the First World War. Although effigies of early French Canadian colonists and religious leaders were produced, the first significant demand for portraits in Canada occurred around 1800 with the influx of United Empire Loyalists to the Maritimes and Ontario. They brought with them the longstanding love of portraits that had developed in Colonial America.[9]

In the ensuing years, provincial landowners, who rarely desired any other forms of art, continued to have themselves and their families visually recorded for posterity, partially out of a desire to legitimize their new-found status. This demand was soon augmented by the rapidly growing urban communities developing in Montreal and Toronto. In Toronto, William von Moll Berczy (1744-1813) was one of the first portrait artists to establish himself. The gap created by his departure for Montreal in 1804 was filled for many years by transient British and American artists until the arrival of Georges Theodore Berthon (1806-1892) in 1844.[10]

Berthon, who began his career in Toronto by allying himself with many socially and politically influential families, established a "formula" for painting prominent men and women which was very successful. According to recent research into Berthon's activities, "his formal portraits of male sitters pleased because of their noble and authoritative demeanor while his female subjects exhibited an appropriate air of gentility."[11] High society's endorsement of Berthon's approach would have gradually filtered down to the wealthy middle-classes who also sought to commemorate themselves and their economic achievements in portraits by talented and thoroughly trained artists. Sydney Tully who had trained abroad was one of their choices.

Immediately upon her return to Canada in 1888 Tully received an important portrait commission from Goldwin Smith (1823-1910) for a likeness of himself that he gave to Cornell University.[12] This commission set the stage for future prestigious assignments. The patronage of an influential person was the best way for an artist to establish her or his

reputation and secure prestigious clientele.[13] Smith, a successful historian and political journalist, had moved to Toronto in 1871 where, four years later, he married Harriet Dixon, widow of Henry Boulton of The Grange. For the rest of his life, which he spent in Toronto, he exerted a marked influence on the development of thought and taste in Canada.[14] A controversial figure whose opinions were often at variance with those of the majority, Smith was nonetheless well respected and a source of inspiration to many people.[15] By securing this commission Tully, freshly arrived from the *ateliers* of Europe, was virtually assured of subsquent work in this field.

Tully's treatment of the distinguished male subject, as evidenced by other portraits (such as the one of Dr. G. Parkin, principal of Upper Canada College, painted in 1899)[16] are typical of the period style as established in Toronto by Berthon and in the United States by Leon Bonnat (1833-1922).[17] During the 1880's American art dealers frequently arranged for members of fashionable circles to be painted by the top Parisian portraitists. One of the most popular was Bonnat, who became very influential as a teacher and successful practioner.[18] The influence of Bonnat's dignified, monumental approach to the individual, which creates an impression of startling immediacy, can be seen in Tully's Dr. Parkin. Here she uses a number of devices favoured by Bonnat including: flat illumination, filling the picture plane with the figure, a shadowy, indefinite background, an expressionless face, and a direct gaze. Although during the first half of the nineteenth century three principle styles of portraiture predominated: classic, romantic, and realist; realistic likenesses were increasingly sought towards the end of the century as a result of the growing rivalry between painting and photography. Middle-class materialism supported an ideology of realism that reinforced the economic and social values of the bourgeoisie by perpetuating, what appeared to many people to be, a truthful rendering of their property and possessions.

Bonnat's approach to female portraiture, which included showing full-length figures in evening clothes and isolating them in large spaces,[19] similarly might have influenced Tully's Mrs. Hayter Reed, 1903 (fig. 17). This well-received, full-length pastel portrait reveals that the conventions of conservative portraiture were much the same in both Canada and America. Tully placed the greatest emphasis on Mrs. Reed's face which is highly detailed in comparison with the loose handling of her dress. Set against an inky background, Mrs. Reed gazes confidently out at the viewer, epitomizing the poised, self-

assured society woman. Because of its full length, Mrs. Hayter Reed is a more imposing figure composition than Dr. Parkin and the richness of her gown is displayed to full advantage since her clothing is an essential signifier of her high social status. Both portraits, however, suggest emotional solidity, self-control and flawless decorum.

This type of Realist portraiture, which first evolved in North America during the 1880's, was extremely successful. As the century closed, however, new more informal variations on the realist theme began to emerge in response to the Aesthetic Movement, which prevailed in North America from about 1900 to 1910.[20] Essentially an offshoot of English Pre-Raphaelism,[21] the Aesthetic Movement similarly drew upon the art of the early Renaissance for stylistic insights.[22] This led to an increased interest in surface patterning. In fact, surface design became so important, even in portraiture, that certain representational elements were sacrificed in favour of the painted surface.

A leading exponent of Aestheticism was James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903),[23] who, in one instance, entitled his 1883 portrait of Theodore Duret: Arrangements in Flesh Colour and Black. By the turn of the century, Whistler had exerted real influence on the artistic scenes of both England and America. A talented American artist who came under the influence of Whistler during the 1880's, and with whom Tully studied c. 1892, was William Merritt Chase (1849-1916).[24] Chase had begun painting realist portraits in the manner of Bonnat. After meeting Whistler in 1885 and travelling with him, Chase began painting portraits that were carefully structured "arrangements" usually emphasizing one dominant colour. His goal was to achieve a balance between the form and personality of the sitter, and the requirements of surface design and aesthetic unity.[25]

Tully's youthful employment colouring portrait photographs and her European training that focused on the study of the painted head, gave her a solid foundation in terms of understanding the structure of the human head. Secure in terms of technical expertise, Tully was able to subtly experiment with a number of stylistic trends that affected portraiture without offending her conservative clientele. In some senses an awareness of such new tends affected her portrait of Mrs. W.H. Moore n.d. (fig. 18).[26] Here Tully appears to have been interested not only in her sitter as an individual but also in her painting as an essay in design. With Mrs. Moore Tully contracted the illusion of space by allowing a flat uniform lighting of the figure to challenge its plastic expression. The light

background, which pushes forward, and the absence of a sharply delineating contour line further accentuates the images two-dimensionality. Instead, a harmonious arrangement of distinctive shapes created by the sitter's hair, face, and the plunging "v" of her robe dominates the composition. Although not radically innovative, the *avant-garde* concerns that Tully addressed in Mrs. Moore are clearly visible when this work is compared to the more traditional approach in Mrs. Hayter Reed.

Other influences, besides the Aesthetic Movement, affected the development of portrait painting. For example, beginning in the 1890's a neo-Georgian trend in portraiture led some painters to emulate the manner of Reynolds.[27] Clients were depicted out-of-doors, often in parks, and frequently in the loosely draped style of eighteenth century portrait costume. This neo-Georgian mode may have had some influence on Tully's 1910 painting Lady in White n.d. (fig. 19). In this large pastel a beautiful, but mysteriously anonymous woman, clothed in a velvety white dress, is set against a blue-black background in which a tree and park bench are barely discernable. The midnight setting, the subject's elusive smile and distracted gaze serve also to make the effect of the painting highly Romantic. Although purchased by the National Gallery of Canada, after being shown only once at the Royal Canadian Academy exhibition of 1910, the critical reception was mixed.[28] It was referred to by one critic as "charming," while another commented that it was "so low in tone that the colour is somewhat lost."[29] Tully's tendency to experiment with tone and colour in her portraits was not always criticized. Lynn C. Doyle writing about an exhibited work by Tully in 1895 remarked: "there is a small head by Miss Tully in which the range of warm grey tones are well felt."[30]

Nevertheless, it should be noted that portrait painting remained viable until the First World War. Realist portraits continued to be demanded since many clients felt that their status was not best conveyed by the flatness and simplicity of the Aesthetic Movement or other such innovative tendencies.[31] By the last decades of the nineteenth century the continuance of Realism helped to transform portraiture into a form of narrative *genre* painting. In portraiture of this nature, the sitter was approached in an informal, intimate way.[32] This type of subjective portraiture, exemplified by Tully's The Twilight of Life, 1894 (fig. 20),[33] tends to idealize the subject and reveal the artist's preoccupation with universals rather than specifics. Thus it departs from the commemorative purposes and idiosyncratic details of realistic portraiture. In subjective portraiture, all-embracing

generalities such as virtue, piety, nobility or , as in the case of The Twilight of Life, old age, are explored. Such general qualities are indicated by the sitter's clothes, stance, expression and setting. In Tully's work, an old woman dressed in a thick black dress buttoned to the neck and a black cape, is depicted in a moment of quiet contemplation or perhaps prayer. On a small table to her right, rest her eyeglasses and their red case, suggesting that only moments ago she was absorbed in reading a book, which now rests open on her lap. The clock in the background implies the lateness of the hour, both for the day and of this woman's life. The portrait's psychological impact is heightened by the fact that Tully averted her subject's gaze thus creating an impression of self-absorption and introspection. While the viewer can only speculate on the old woman's thoughts, the haunting hollowness of her eyes suggest that God, life, and death are among them. Tully painted The Twilight of Life in oil rather than pastel, her usual medium for portraiture. The reason for this may have been, (in addition to the fact that oils may have been taken more seriously in exhibitions) what one critic considered to be, pastel's only drawback: its inability to create "depth" - that profound, liquid, translucent glow which was inherent to oil paint.[34] Perhaps Tully felt that the gravity of the theme in this work was best served by oil paint. Another example of narrative genre portraiture by Tully is The Enchanted Forest 1905 (fig. 21). In this pastel painting, Tully depicted a young woman in the guise of a fairy, the image probably inspired by William Shakespeare's A Midsummer's Night Dream.[35] Complete with diaphonous wings and mysterious "Pandora's box," this work employs pastel to full advantage. The abstract titles of both The Twilight of Life and The Enchanted Forest indicates the viewer should not expect to encounter specific individuals.

It should be noted, however, that commissioned portraits could also be simply titled, for example Lady in White. Such a general title raises the issue of mimesis, which leads one to question the relationship between the lifelike and the ideal. As the portrait historian Eugenio Battisti asks: "To what extent can or must the artist pursue the likeness? In what manner and how far is he [the artist] allowed to depart from it? How much should he idealize his model, mend its defects, or exaggerate them?"[36] In order to achieve verismilitude a portrait artist must resort to a whole series of narrative and/or stylistic conventions. As can be seen in a number of Tully's portraits, she, like other portraitists, usually approached her subject by one of two paths: either seeking resemblance to the subject or pursuing its idealization or transfiguration. She undertook the latter, however,

only when the intention of the portrait itself was more general, such as in The Lady in White, rather than specific as in Mrs. Moore.

The primary goal in portraiture, however, was to provide an overall conception, or anthology of an individual. As we have seen, medium played an important role, one that Tully used to advantage in her many portraits of women, which she executed in pastel. The association of women with pastel painting dates back to the early eighteenth century when the Venetian woman artist Rosalba Carriera (1675-1757) first popularized the medium.[37] Although Carriera's success made her very influential, as the eighteenth century progressed pastel was more frequently relegated to the confines of the preliminary study and generally considered to be not "fitted for serious efforts."[38] It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that pastel was revived as a self-sufficient medium. The way pastel was being used by nineteenth century practitioners, however, had changed. Greater emphasis was placed on using parallel hatchings of pure colour to render form, relief and light simultaneously.[39] This can be seen in Tully's Lady in White and The Enchanted Forest where the pastel is thickly applied and built up through superimposed layers of crosshatching. Even on the delicate facial features of the Lady in White close observation reveals her creamy complexion to be a series of hatchings of pure colour; strokes of green and salmon being clearly visible. This bold use of pastel, whereby texture and medium are deliberately emphasized, was compatible with the then modern tendency of the divided brushstroke in oil painting. Like the Impressionist technique of broken colour this practice results in remarkable depth of tone and produces a vivid interplay of subtle shades.

Tully was one of a number of North American artists[40] interested in reviving the medium which by 1898 was being duly noted in the Canadian press:

> Pastel as a medium seems to be gaining in favour with our local artists. It has many advantages as well as a few disadvantages but we feel sure its full capabilities have not yet by any means been exploited.[41]

In the United States this small group of reformers was first championed by James McNeill Whistler and later supported by the success of William Merritt Chase's pastels. Chase, under whom Tully studied c. 1892, was one of the founding members of both the shortlived Society of American Painters in Pastel established in 1884, and the Society of

Painters in Pastel established in 1899. Chase's reputation as an accomplished colourist, especially when it came to flesh tones, was well established and it may have been for this reason, along with his distinction as an adroit handler of the pastel medium, that Tully chose to study with him.[42] Chase insisted on capturing the "impression" of the subject, whether it be portraits painted in one sitting or landscapes completed out-of-doors. For such tasks pastels were conveniently light and portable. Furthermore, they had the advantages of coming in a large range of prefabricated colours and of always being ready for instant, rapid use. All this made them a handy medium for Tully's many paintings of Toronto society women, an example of which may be seen in her portrait of Mrs. E. Aemilius Jarvis c. 1898 (fig. 22).

Mrs. Jarvis (1861-1927) was the daughter of Sir Aemilius Irving, a Toronto M.P. and lawyer, and Augusta Gugy of Quebec. In 1886 she married her cousin, the well-known Toronto broker and yachtsman, E.A. Jarvis. In this oval portrait, Tully placed Mrs. Jarvis, who was dressed simply and wearing a single strand of pearls, against a plain, moss-green background with light burgundy hatching. Tully succeeded in exploring beneath this extraneous detail, however, by creating a subtly complex expression for her sitter's face. Her head tilted slightly to the right, Mrs. Jarvis's hazel eyes gaze distractedly over the viewers right shoulder. Strongly illuminated from the left, half of her face is shrouded in shadow. Ironically, and interestingly, it is the shaded side of Mrs. Jarvis's face that appears to be smiling: her right eye is delicately crinkled and the right side of her mouth slightly uplifted, while the left, and well-lit side of her face remains far more somber; the eye uncomfortably expressionless, the lips turned down almost forming a frown. While the reasons for this frown remain speculative, it adds to the psychological depth of what, for the most part, is a very visually appealing portrait reminiscent of the eighteenth century works of Vigee-LeBrun.[43] Although referring to a different portrait (of a Mrs. Russell), the following quote could just as easily have been written about Tully's portrait of Mrs. E. Aemelius Jarvis:

> The grace and dignity of the pose, and vitality as well, the essential refinement and aesthetic feeling of the subject, the versatile medium in which it is created - pastel, admitting of delicacy of handling and luminousness - all combine to make a subject which yields unceasing pleasure.[44]

Although a versatile and spontaneous medium; pastel (particularly the way it was employed in the nineteenth century with very little smudging and a great deal of emphasis on line) unlike oil paint, could rarely be reworked. In skillful hands like Tully's it could be used to render both subtle colouring and a rugged effect.[45] As one contemporary practitioner warned, however:

> ...if they [pastellists] aim at freshness of colour, spontaneity of effect, and directness of technique, they must be quite sure of what they are going to do. Any fumbling is fatal.[46]

Each touch had to be right and the composition fully formulated before the artist commenced. Such technical challenges in the difficult medium of pastel would have been a supreme test of Tully's skills as a portraitist. That she was more than successful in this arena was demonstrated by the fact that she was commissioned in 1900 by Canadian Pacific Railway to execute eleven oval, bust-length pastel portraits of the wives of the Governors-General of Canada, for the Gold Room of the, now demolished, Royal Alexandra Hotel in Winnipeg, and one full-length portrait of Princess Alexandra.[47] These portraits, completed over a number of years (1900-1908), are now located at The Empress Hotel in Victoria, British Columbia.

Sydney Tully's success in the field of portrait painting cannot be attributed to facility alone, but must also have been due to her full understanding of this art form. Comfortable working in a variety of media, Tully was able to accommodate both upper- and middle-class patrons. Nonetheless, in the vast majority of the portraits by Tully located to date, her choice of medium would appear to have been largely determined by the gender of the sitter: pastel for women, oil for men. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, although the hierarchy of genders was perpetuated by the hierarchy of artistic media. Certainly pastel painting was being quite vigorously revived during this time, which may account somewhat for its popularity. Although Tully's pastel portraits of women tend, at first glance, to be suggestive of the softly blended creations of the eighteenth century a closer examination suggests that Tully was aware of *avant-garde* concerns in terms of her colourful cross-hatching. It is a testament to Tully's success as a portraitist that she was capable of reconciling the largely conservative demands of her clients for stereotypical imagery with her own sometimes more *avant-garde*, artistic interests.

CHAPTER FIVE

Notes

1. J.W.L. Forster, Sight and Insight (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1941): 44.

2. [Goldwin Smith] The Bystander n.s. (June 1890): 300. Smith wrote: "Miss Tully's portrait of a young girl (No. 215) [Miss Francie Dumooulin] shows fine treatment." By 1892 critics were maintaining that "...Miss Tully's portraits would claim attention in any exhibit..." H. "Art in Toronto," Arcadia 1(July 1892).

3. "Exhibition at the Art Gallery," Arcadia 1 (March 1893): 449. The reviewer wrote: "A good idea of the general character of the work may be obtained by looking at the leading canvasses. The most representative and worthy of note are portraits by Harris, Grier and Miss Tully..." while Lynn C. Doyle wrote in "Art Notes" Saturday Night (27 April 1895) "This artist [Miss Tully] is very successful in her portraits; that of Lieut.-Colonel Bolton is worthy of special note."

4. "Art and the Public," The Canadian Courier 3:13 (29 February 1908): 6.

5. The following are some quotes that highlight Tully's skills at portraiture: "Miss Tully's portrait of Miss L. LeFevre is a clever piece of work; the pose of the figure is natural, the flow of lines graceful, and the flesh tints blend well." Van "Art and Artists," Saturday Night (1 January 1893). "In [Miss Tully's] Retrospection the flesh is well modelled and the colour good." F.K.G. "Art and Artists" Saturday Night (27 January 1894).

6. The interesting gendered implication of this is discussed later in this chapter.

7. For a thorough overview of this movement see: Dianne H. Pilgrim, "The Revival of Pastels in Nineteenth-Century America: The Society of Painters in Pastel," American Art Journal 10:2 (November 1978): 43-62.

8. See: Michael Quick, American Portraiture in the Grand Manner, 1720-1920. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1981); Elizabeth Brown, Aspects of Portraiture (Edmonton: Edmonton Art Gallery, 1978) and Wayne J. Ready, Early Canadian Portraits (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1969).

9. Ready, Early Canadian Portraits, 1.

10. Angela Carr, "George Theodore Berthon (1806-1892): Portraiture, Patronage, and Criticism in Nineteenth Century Toronto." Journal of Canadian Art History XI:1 &2 (1988): 23-53.

11. Ibid., 26.

12. This portrait is unfortunately now lost.

13. For example, when George T. Berthon established his practice in Toronto in 1844 on introduction to and commission from, the Anglican Bishop of Toronto, John Strachen, quickly paved the way for future requests from well-to-do Torontonians. Angela Carr, "George Theodore Berthon," 27.

14. Smith helped found the Canadian Monthly and National Review in 1872 and in 1874 the Nation to which he frequently contributed; in 1876 he began the Evening Telegram and in 1880 initiated and wrote the Bystander; he was also involved in the founding of the Week in 1883.

15. For a concise yet thorough account of Smith's life and many of his provocative views (with regard to, for example, the Boer War and Canadian Imperialism) see the Dictionary of Canadian Biography: Canadian Who Was Who 1875-1937 Vol. 2 (Toronto: Trans Canada Press, 1938): 405-415.

16. Unfortunately there is no photographic reproduction of this painting.

17. Bonnat was born and educated in Spain. In the latter part of his career he became an enormously successful portrait painter with paintings of many French presidents, Victor Hugo and a number of American miillionaires.

18. Quick, American Portraiture, 63.

19. Ibid, 67.

20. Ibid., 67. The Aesthetic Movement flourished in England from about 1870 on; advocating "art for art's sake." Its chief exponents were Walter Pater (1839-1894); Oscar Wilde (1856-1900) and James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903).

21. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, or PRB, was first formed in 1848 as a result of discussions between William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), John Everett Milais (1829-1896) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882). By means of carefully chosen subject matter, elaborate symbolism, brilliant colour and extreme detail they sought to regenerate English art. By 1854 the movement was breaking up with many of the affiliated painters going their separate ways.

22. Quick, 67.

23. Whistler, born in the United States and educated at West Point Military Academy, moved to Paris in 1859 after working briefly as a cartographer. There he met Fantin-Latour and Degas and was influenced by Courbet. In 1859 he moved to London but retained his close contact with Paris. Whistler emphasized the aesthetic nature of his pictures over and above the subject and chose titles such as "Symphony" or "Nocturne."

24. Chase, who became one of the most influential teachers in the United States during the last decades of the nineteenth century, first met Whistler in 1885. Chase's brushwork was precise but expressive, creating dazzling surface effects in a wide range of hues. Evidence of this can be found not only in his landscapes, but also his portraiture (for which he was famous as well).

25. Quick, 67.

26. Although the date of execution of Mrs. W.H. Moore is not known, I am not suggesting that it was painted after Mrs. Hayter Reed, simply that the two portraits differ in their concerns.

27. Quick, 67. I have been unable to uncover any reasons for the emergence of this trend.

28. Identification of which groups liked these different portrait styles and their reasons for doing are important issues that require further research.

29. From an unidentified newspaper clipping, R.C.A. Scrapbook, National Archives of Canada.

30. Lynn C. Dyle, "Art Notes," Saturday Night (4 May 1895).

31. Quick, 67.

32. Ready, Early Canadian Portraits, 2.

33. Twilight of Life, for which Tully won a Bronze Medal at the 1908 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, was later given by her to the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1906. It was very well received by the public. One representative review states: "Miss Sidney S. Tully, A.R.C.A., sends a group of three oils and two watercolours. Of these "Twilight of Life" (No. 40), a study of an old woman is at once the most important and the best. Nothing that Miss Tully has done, and she has produced many admirable works during the few past years, approaches this one. From every point of view it is mature and skillful in the highest degree. The pose is simple, the lines are thoroughly well arranged, the texture of the clothes and flesh are altogether admirable. It is easily the best of the figure studies in the exhibition." James Mavor, Notes on Appreciation of Art and on Art in Ontario with Remarks on the Exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists MOCCCXCVIII [1898] (Toronto: George N. Morang, 1898): 22.

34. M.G. van Rensselaer, "American Painters in Pastel," Century [New York 29 (December 1884): 209.

35. In this tale two young lovers elope to a magical forest where they encounter Titania and Oberon, queen and king of the fairies. Tully painted one other character from this play in 1909 - Peaseblossom - who was one of four of Titania's fairies.

36. Eugenio Battisti, "Concepts of Portraiture" Encylopedia of World War Art II (London: McGraw-Hill, 1966): 470.

37. Carriera, who was made an "accademico di merito" by the Accademia di S. Luca in Rome, achieved immense popularity in Paris when she visited in 1720-1721 and where she made pastel portraits of notables from all over Europe. Pastel itself has a long venerable history, recently dealt with in Genevieve Monnier's book Pastels: From the 16th to the 20th Century (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1984).

38. A.L. Baldry, "Pastel - Its Value and Present Position," Magazine of Art 24 (1900): 278.

39. Monnier, Pastel, 32.

40. Geore Reid was another Canadian artist who dabbled in this medium. Lynn C. Doyle refers to a number of pastels he exhibited at a commercial gallery, in Saturday Night (30 November 1895). This medium did not, however, form a significant part of Reid's *oeuvre* and he did not appear to be part of the movement afoot to resurrect the medium by exhibiting pastels, as Tully did, at the major R.C.A. and O.S.A. examinations.

41. Jean Grant, "Studio and Gallery," Saturday Night (2 July 1898).

42. Chase had opened his very successful summer school at Shinnecock, near Southampton, Long Island in 1891 (operating it until 1902) where he accepted about one hundred pupils each summer, the majority of whom were women. Ronald G. Pisano, The Students of William Merritt Chase (Huntington, New York: Heckscher Museum, 1973).

43. Louise Elizabeth Vigee-Lebrun (1755-1842) was an extremely successful woman painter. She was trained by her father who was a pastellist and eventually became painter to Queen Marie Antoinette of France. Vigee-Lebrun excelled in portraits of women and children.

44. H., "Art in Toronto," Arcadian 1:5 (July 1892): 98.

45. S. Melton Fisher, "The Art of Painting in Pastel," Magazine of Art 1 n.s. (1903): 145.

46. Ibid., 147.

47. The portraits are now located at the Empress Hotel in Victoria, B.C. I have been unable to locate the portrait of Princess Alexandra. The wives of the Governors-General that Tully painted are: Louise Elizabeth, Countess of Durham; Mary Louisa, Countess of Elgin; Elizabeth, Viscountess Monck; Lady Adelaide

Annabelle Lisgar; Harriot, Marchioness of Differin and Ava; H.R.H. Princess Louise, Marchioness of Lorne; Maud, Marchioness of Landsdowne; Constance, Countess of Derby; Ishbel, Countess of Aberdeen; Mary, Countess of Minto; and Alice, Countess Grey. At the time of research The Empress was closed down for extensive restoration and the portraits were in storage.

CONCLUSION

Sydney Strickland Tully was not a radical or precendent-setting innovator in the fine arts. That this was also the case for all of her Canadian peers when judged by this yardstick is frequently overlooked. Traditionally, art historical discourse has assessed the significance and worth of an artist's output by its affinity with *avant-garde* concerns. Thus, the artistic production of women artists, often maligned for being amateurish, traditional, and "feminine," has been seen as having no historical significance. Such categories, however, are rooted in a patriarchal art world, and are not universal truths. The rise of new methodologies in recent years has allowed art historians to approach works from a fresh perspective and re-assess the validity of earlier conclusions by considering artists who have not fit into the modernist canon. Thus the omission of women artists who often operated within different paradigms is being rectified by more patient readings of the intentions and merits of their work.

In Canada, aside from the catalogue From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada,[1] very little work has been produced on turn-of-the-century Canadian women artists. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, Sydney Tully was mentioned or briefly discussed in the major treatises on Canadian art.[2] The paucity of textual space allocated to her was in keeping with the survey nature of these books, which often did no more than record an artist's name for posterity. Newton MacTavish, however, devoted an entire chapter to women artists in his book, The Fine Arts in Canada (1925). In so doing, he provided the most commentary on Tully.[3] Despite this attention, Tully has been completely neglected in recent art historical scholarship. The reason for this appears to rest solely on the fact that she was a nineteenth-century woman artist who worked in a fairly academic manner. Her conventional training and style seems to have caused most twentieth century art historians to overlook her work (along with the work of her female colleagues) in preference of the paintings of more *avant-garde* artists such as James Wilson Morrice, William Brymner, and Maurice Cullen. If *juste-milieu* artists are mentioned, they are inevitably men. I feel that this fact alone is sufficient justification for historical inquiry.

Tully's career as a professional artist spanned a period when a number of changes were occurring in attitudes towards womens' work. The result was that Tully had a wider variety of career choices than were enjoyed by previous generations of women. But as we

have seen, Tully's decision to pursue a career in the fine arts was, in all likelihood, not an unproblematic one despite the fact that one of the major social alterations to grow out of the industrial revolution was the growth of a women's movement.[4] Nineteenth century feminists, most of them white, middle-class women, worked towards the full integration of women into all aspects of economic and cultural activity. They fought against the restrictive, idealized roles of the bourgeois wife and mother. In the area of the fine arts, this transformation was particularly striking. Although vastly outnumbered by their male peers, the number of women artists practicing during the nineteenth century greatly increased.[5] But in spite of the growing number of women artists, the fine arts were still considered an unorthodox profession for women. Those who entered the field required the kind of commitment and tenacity that was demonstrated by Sydney Tully. Negotiating many of the obstacles they encountered in pursuit of their goals, (such as segregated training and the inaccessibility of nude models), women artists seem to have successfully turned to each other for support and approbation. Developing their own approach to the bohemianism of the Latin Quarter in Paris, women artists including Tully cultivated a unique lifestyle and self-image. Like their male peers, however, these women used a variety of styles in their work. The increasing dominance of the middle-classes, as a result of the industrial revolution,[6] had reshaped many areas of social knowledge including that of the art world. Artists gradually shifted towards catering to middle-class patrons who preferred contemporary subject matter. In searching for a new formal language to accompany such innovative subject matter, many artists rebelled against academic norms and artistic conventions.[7] In some respects, Tully's work demonstrates an interest in *avant-garde* concerns such as Knalhaven, Dordrecht and Mrs. Moore. And yet, at the same time, a large number of artists like Tully also continued to practice largely within the academic tradition. Evidently this versatility made Tully particularly popular with the art-going public of her day.

In Canada, the public desire for conservative imagery reminiscent of the Dutch Hague School prevailed. Much of Tully's work endorses this tradition. She was however at the forefront of a trend that marked a return to the figurative in Canada after years in which the dominant theme had been landscapes. Although Tully produced a number of landscapes, I feel her greatest contribution was in the area of *genre* painting, particularly in works addressing the theme of women and domestic labour. It would appear the relatively small population base in Ontario at the time led many artists to carve a niche for themselves

by concentrating on specific themes or subject matter.[8] Certainly Tully's many visual recordings of women and their physical labours in the home suggest that not only was there a market to sustain her output in this area, but also that her own interest in this subject matter was probably not a superficial one. Nonetheless, to appreciate her *genre* paintings it is not necessary to know whether Tully deliberately intended to disrupt patriarchal imagery. As suggested earlier, her unorthodox pictures of women may have been the unconscious result of her own position as a woman observing the labours of her sisters. In Tully's case there is little available evidence to illuminate her intentions. And yet, whether consciously or unconsciously painted, Tully's imagery is much less silent than her female subjects.

CONCLUSION

Notes

1. Dorothy Farr and Natalie Luckyj. From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1975).

2. In chronological order these are:

   (a) Robert F. Gagen. "History of Art Socieities in Ontario," Canada, An Encyclopedia of the Country, Vol. 4, Ed. J. Castell Hopkins (Toronto: The Lincott Publishing Co., 1898) 360-365. "So successful was the School [the Ontario School of Art] that many of its students are now well-known in the Art World of Canada, amongst them being....Miss S. Tully "

   (b) H.J. Morgan. The Canadian Men and Women of the Time (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912) 112. Biographical entry with an accompanying quote from the Toronto Globe: "Possesses an art as refined as it is vigorous."

   (c) E.F.B. Johnston. "Painting and Sculpture in Canada," Canada and Its Provinces, Vol 12, Ed. Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty (Toronto: Publishers Association of Canada 1913) 594-640. In Part II, History, Johnston categorized artists as living or dead. Of the thirty-one deceased artists discussed, only one woman artist, Sidney Strickland Tully, was mentioned. Johnston described her work as "varied but decorative."

   (d) Newton MacTavish. The Fine Arts of Canada (Toronto: MacMillan Company, 1925) 141. "Her work shows great breadth of artistic inclination and observation, comprising as it does a very extended study of phases of landscape with figures, figures and portraits, decorative studies and designs of various sorts and some efforts at modelling medallions."

   (e) M.O. Hammond. Painting and Sculpture in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1930) 53. In Chapter IX, where Hammond devotes two pages to women painters, he wrote: "Sidney Strickland Tully, who was connected with the famous Strickland family, painted portraits and landscapes for many years in Toronto."

   (f) William Colgate. Canadian Art: Its Origin and Development (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1943) 37. "It is in fact noteworthy that among the artists represented in the National Gallery collection many received their earlier training at the Ontario School of Art and Design, now the Ontario College of Art. A complete list is not possible, but it would include...Sydney

Strickland Tully... The collection is especially valuable to Canadians because almost every artist of importance in the Dominion, past and present, is represented there....."

(g) W. Stewart Wallace. The Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol II, I.-Z. (Toronto: MacMillan Company, 1945) 673. Biographical entry.

3. See 2(d) above.

4. For further discussion of this relationship, see Heleieth I.B. Saffioti Women in Class Society (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

5. As with women feminists and suffragists, women artists were largely culled from white, middle-class backgrounds. For a concise but thorough treatment of women artists in history, see Wendy Slatkin, Women Artists in History from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985).

6. For a thorough analysis of the mechanization of the industrial process and social and economic changes which resulted thereby, see H.L. Beales, The Industrial Revolution: 1750-1850 (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1958).

7. Useful sources that discuss the emergence of the 'avant-garde' are, T.J. Clark, The Painting of Modern Life (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); and Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.

8. For example, Laura Muntz Lyall was renowned for her paintings of children while Mary Heister Reid was tremendously successful as a painter of flowers and gardens.

FIGURES

FIGURE 1. Sketch for the Market, n.d.
pencil on grey paper
23.5 x 30.8 cm
Art Gallery of Ontario

FIGURE 2. The Market, n.d.
wash over pencil on paper
21.8 x 29.4 cm
Art Gallery of Ontario

FIGURE 3. Portrait of Dominique, c. 1900
oil on canvas
41.0 x 31.0 cm
Art Gallery of Ontario

FIGURE 4. Lady with a Dog, n.d.
oil on canvas board
53.3 x 45.7 cm
Art Gallery of Ontario

FIGURE 5. Working from the Model, n.d.
watercolour, pencil on paper
22.3 x 17.4 cm
Art Gallery of Ontario

FIGURE 6. Knalhaven, Dordrecht, 1907
oil on canvas
71.5 x 92.1 cm
National Gallery of Canada

FIGURE 7. Flaxtree, Oak Walk, Jersey, n.d.
in Memorial Exhibition Catalogue. Metroplitan Toronto Library
present location unknown

FIGURE 8. The Forclosure of the Mortgage, 1893
by George Reid
oil on canvas
180.3 x 276.9 cm
Government of Ontario Art Collection, Toronto

FIGURE 9. Jeanne, 1898
oil on canvas
38.0 x 46.0 cm
Nipissing College, North Bay, Ontario

FIGURE 10. Harvest, c. 1906
in Memorial Exhibition Catalogue, Metropolitan Toronto Library
present location unknown

FIGURE 11. Mother and Child, c. 1908
in Memorial Exhibition Catalogue, Metropolitan Tororto Library
present location unknown

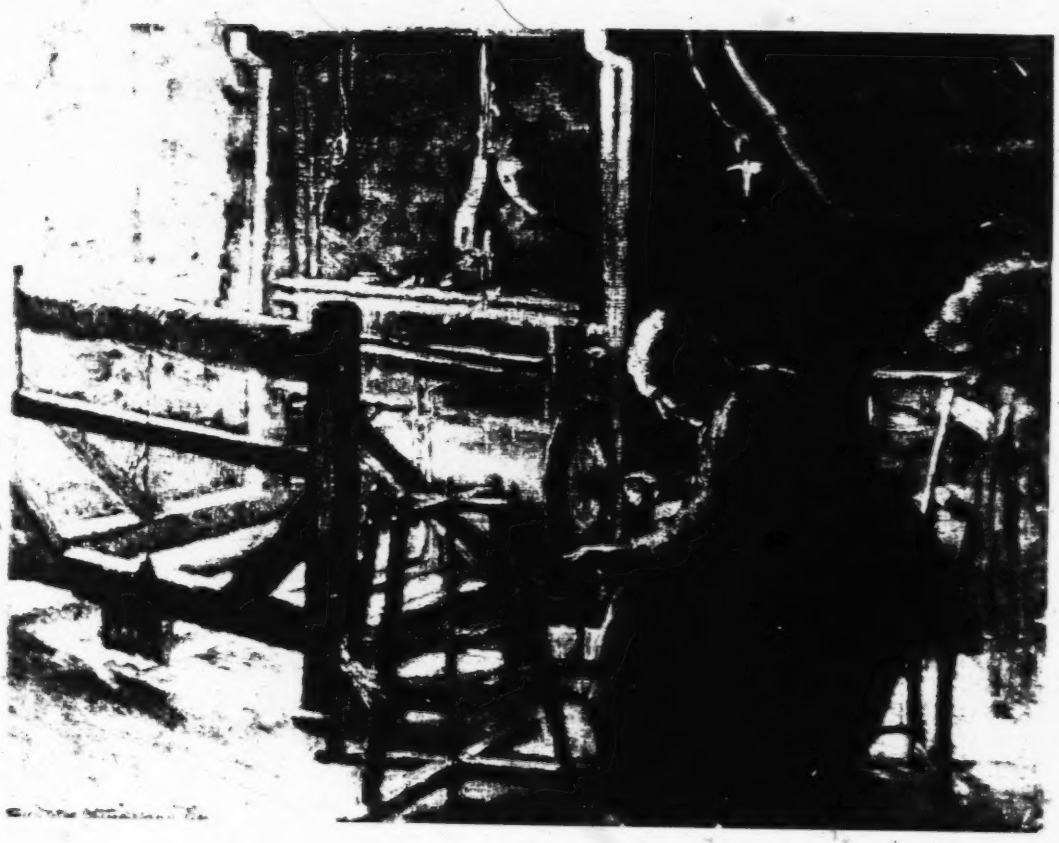

FIGURE 12. At the Loom: French Canadian Interior, 1899
oil on canvas
24.8 x 61.9 cm
Government of Ontario Art Collection, Toronto

FIGURE 13. Washing Day, n.d.
oil on canvas
49.9 x 37.2 cm
Art Gallery of Ontario

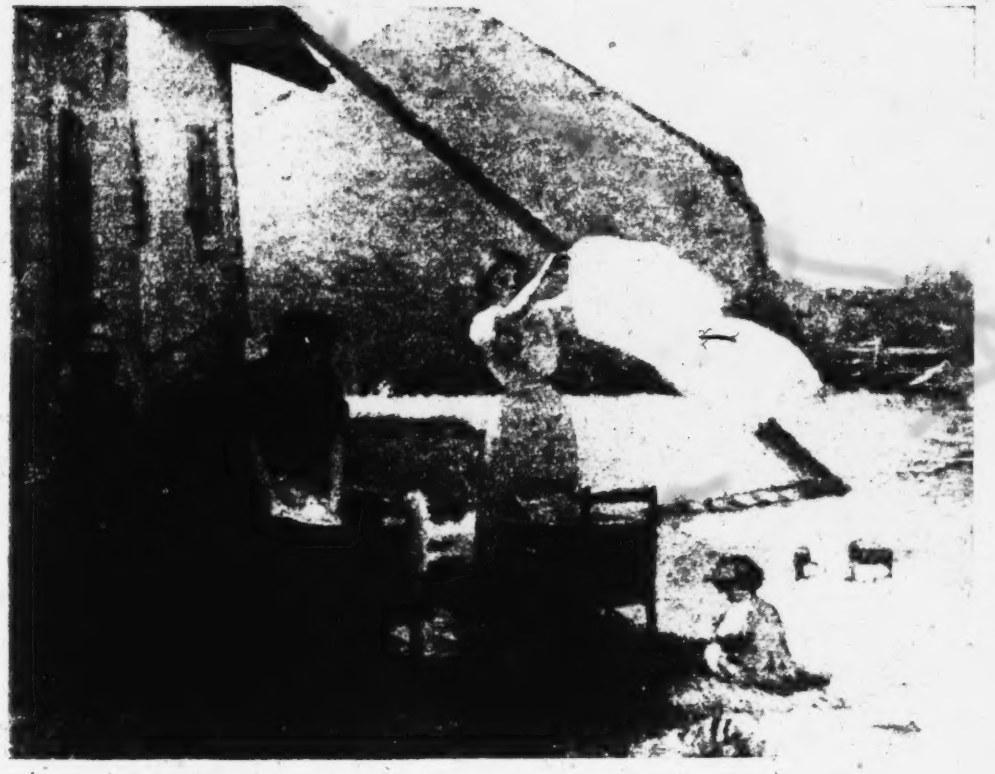

FIGURE 14. Washing, c. 1899
in Memorial Exhibition Catalogue, Metropolitan Toronto Library
present location unknown

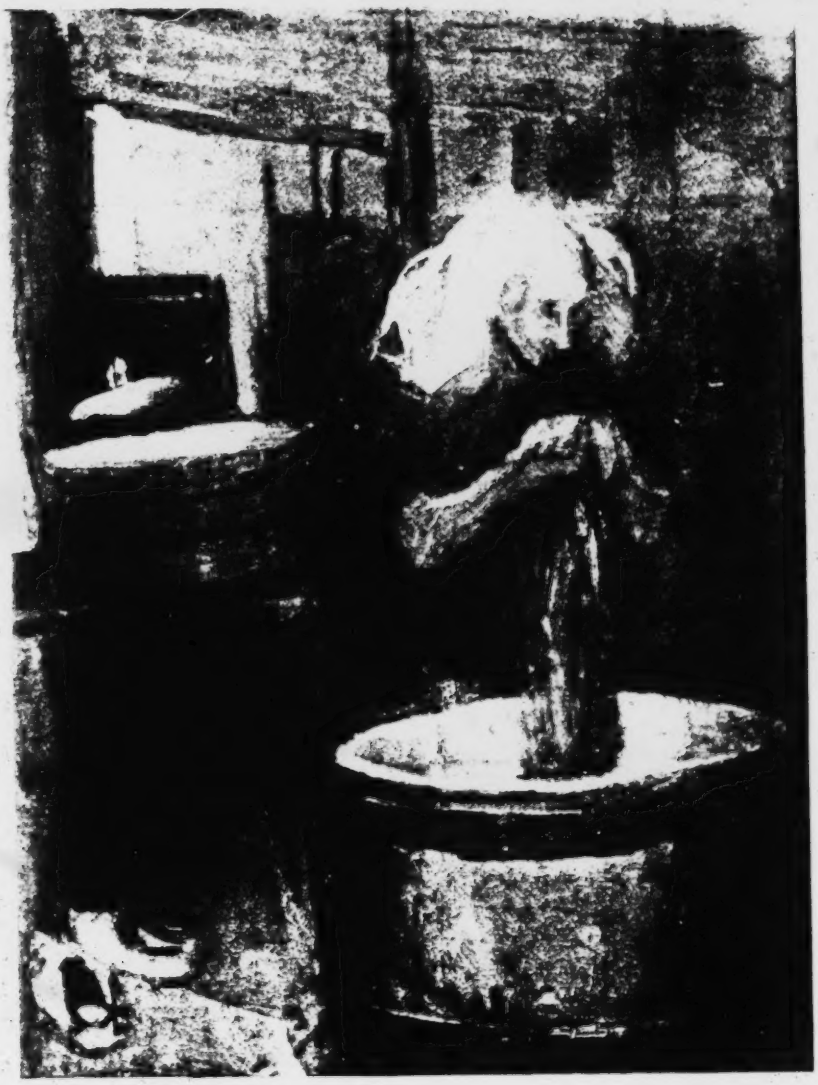

FIGURE 15. Washing, c. 1906
in Memorial Exhibition Catalogue. Metropolitan Toronto Library
present location unknown

FIGURE 16. Windy Weather, Holland, 1906
in Canadian National Exhibition Catalogue. Ontario Archives. Toronto
present location unknown

FIGURE 17. Mrs. Hayter Reed, 1903
in Memorial Exhibition Catalogue, Metropolitan Toronto Library
present location unknown

FIGURE 18. Mrs. W.H. Moore, n.d.
in Memorial Exhibition Catalogue, Metropolitan Toronto Library
present location unknown

FIGURE 19. Lady in White, n.d.
pastel on wove paper
100.3 x 73.9 cm
National Gallery of Canada

FIGURE 20. The Twilight of Life, 1894
oil on canvas
91.8 x 71.5 cm
Art Gallery of Ontario

FIGURE 21. The Enchanted Forest, 1905
pastel on paper
84.0 x 56.0 cm
Art Gallery of Ontario

FIGURE 22. Mrs. E. Aemilius Jarvis, c. 1898
pastel on paper
53.0 x 43.0 cm
Royal Ontario Museum.

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Anon. [An Unlearned Visitor]. "A Gossip About The First Dominion Art Exhibition." Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review 4 (April 1880): 545-553.

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